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neque clamor, neque dolor erit
ultra *quia prima abierunt*

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TO

I. D. N.

They all were looking for a king
To slay their foes and lift them high:
Thou cam'st, a little baby thing
That made a woman cry.

O Son of Man, to right my lot
Nought but Thy presence can avail;
Yet on the road Thy wheels are not,
Nor on the sea Thy sail!

My how or when Thou wilt not heed,
But come down Thine own secret stair,
That Thou mayst answer all my need,
Yea, every bygone prayer.

PREFACE

This collection has been published already in two series: the first issued in 1879, the second in 1885. Many thousands of these books have been circulated in Britain and America. In response to repeated requests, they have now been arranged in one volume. I have taken the opportunity of revising the whole, and of adding many new pieces. It will be observed that the main purpose kept in view throughout has been to provide a book of religious consolation.

The poems, even when by well-known writers, have been largely selected from fugitive publications. My especial thanks are due to Miss Christina G. Rossetti for her permission to include so many of her poems, and for the kind interest she has taken in the work. I am very grateful to

the many authors and publishers through whose generosity I have been able to use copyright poems. Among these are the late Mrs. Craik, the late Rev. William Barnes, the late Mr. Robert Browning, Dr. George Mac Donald, Mr. Skelton, Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Messrs. Nelson and Sons, the Rev. Alfred Norris, and many others. In one or two cases I have failed to trace the authorship of the poems. Should any have been admitted, through inadvertence, without permission of the copyright holders, it is hoped the involuntary transgression will be forgiven.

BAY TREE LODGE,
FROGNAL, HAMPSTEAD,
December 1892.

CONTENTS

I. THE DESPONDING AND THE ANXIOUS

		PAGE
Consider the Ravens	*George Mac Donald*	3
The Father of the Fatherless	*William Barnes*	6
Defeated	*Sarah Williams*	8
Christmas Bells	*Charles Kingsley*	9
'Not without hope'	*Isabella Fyvie Mayo*	10
The Mystery of God's Providence	*Alfred Norris*	11
A Call to Wandering Children	*Anon.*	12
Against Tears	*Sarah Williams*	13
'The Sunrise never failed us yet'	*Celia Thaxter*	14
Come unto Me	*Edwin Paxton Hood*	15
Why art thou Sorrowful?	*Frederick W. Faber*	16
Resting in God's Love	*Anon.*	18
To a Mourner	*Alfred Norris*	20
The Day is over	*T. T. Lynch*	22
Forsaken	*Dora Greenwell*	25

		PAGE
The Right must Win	*Frederick W. Faber*	26
Better Things	*George Mac Donald*	29
All Saints	*Edwin Hatch*	31
My Birthday	*John Greenleaf Whittier*	33
Losses	*Frances Browne*	36
Going Home	*Frances Browne*	38
Consecration	*Edward Dowden*	40
Work and Rest	*Anon.*	41
Fishermen—not of Galilee	*Dinah M. Craik*	43
To the End	*Anon.*	45
The Lamb of God	*Katharine Tynan*	47
A Prayer	*Alfred Norris*	48
Christian Patience	*George Matheson*	49
Would you be Young again?	*Baroness Nairne*	51

II. THE SICK AND THE DYING

A Reverie in Sickness	*George Mac Donald*	55
Passing Away	*Christina G. Rossetti*	58
The Flower of the Flock	*William Brighty Rands*	60
Wishes about Death	*Frederick W. Faber*	63
'Having a desire to depart'	*John Stanyan Bigg*	65

		PAGE
In the June Twilight	*Dinah M. Craik*	68
A Song of the River	*B. M.*	70
'Wind me a Summer Crown,' she said	*Menella Bute Smedley*	73
Paradise	*Christina G. Rossetti*	74
Dominus Illuminatio Mea	*R. D. B.*	76
'I will lift up mine eyes'	*Christina G. Rossetti*	77
Complete in Him	*Joseph A. Torrey*	79
Through the Gates	*Alfred Norris*	80
A Good Confession	*Dora Greenwell*	82
A Ballad of Trees and the Master	*Sidney Lanier*	86
Peace	*Henry Vaughan*	87
Poor Ellen	*Gerald Massey*	88
We shall Rise again	*Anon.*	90
Paradise	*Christina G. Rossetti*	92
Sweet Death	*Christina G. Rossetti*	94
Mother Country	*Christina G. Rossetti*	95
At Last	*John Greenleaf Whittier*	98
Questions and Answers	*Alfred Norris*	100
Out of the Body to God	*Anon.*	102
To a Young Girl Dying	*T. W. Parsons*	104

		PAGE
The Paths of Death	*Frederick W. Faber*	105
'Talitha Cumi'	*W. B. Robertson*	108
'Bury me in Kirkbride'	*Robert Wanlock Reid*	110
The Taken to the Left	*W. R. N.*	113
Unfulfilled	*Anon.*	114
Dying	*F. W. F.*	116
Vespers	*Dora Greenwell*	118

III. THE BEREAVED

A Meeting	*Anon.*	123
The Angel of Patience	*John Greenleaf Whittier*	124
Our Angel Child	*John Stanyan Bigg*	125
'For of such is the kingdom'	*Eliza W. Nicoll*	128
'When the Night and Morning meet'	*Dora Greenwell*	130
Released	*A. D. T. Whitney*	132
'As in a glass darkly'	*Alfred Norris*	134
Vesta	*John Greenleaf Whittier*	136
The E'en brings a' Hame	*John Skelton*	137
Bereavement	*E. B. Browning*	138
Consolation	*E. B. Browning*	139
In Time of Trouble	*Björnstjerne Björnson*	140

		PAGE
The Sleep	*E. B. Browning*	141
A Dirge	*Alfred Norris*	143
Over the Hillside	*Dinah M. Craik*	144
Resignation	*James Pritchett Bigg*	146
By the Dead	*Alfred Norris*	149
Little Christel	*William Brighty Rands*	152
A Farewell Song	*George Mac Donald*	153
The Girl that lost things	*George Mac Donald*	154
In the Churchyard	*Alfred Norris*	157
Not lost, but gone before	*Gerald Massey*	160
The Flower Fadeth	*William Knox Macadam*	161
Home Visions	*Alfred Norris*	163
A Song of Rest	*Dora Greenwell*	165
Her Pilgrimage	*Anon.*	167
Are the Children at Home?	*M. E. M. Sangster*	169
The Silent Prayer	*Eleanora L. Hervey*	172
Remember	*Christina G. Rossetti*	174
Sound Sleep	*Christina G. Rossetti*	175
Grandfather's Pet	*Stewart Robertson*	176
Into Mary's Bosom	*Dinah M. Craik*	179
A Song of Hope	*George Mac Donald*	182

		PAGE
At Nain	*George A. Chadwick* .	184
Ours	*M. Veley* . . .	188
Tokens	*W. B. Philpot* . .	190
Safe	*S. K. P.* . . .	191
Good-night	*Frederick Greenwood*	192
That never was on Sea or Land	*Elizabeth Stuart Phelps*	194
The New Name . . .	*D. Gilmour* . .	197
Just Dead	*Anon.* . . .	198
All Saints' Day . . .	*Dinah M. Craik* .	199
The Vision of the Snow .	*Anon.* . . .	201
The Hymn of the Dead .	*Anon.* . . .	203
In the Sea	*Hiram Rich* . .	205
Christmas Song of the Old Children	*George Mac Donald* .	207
The Wife a-Lost . . .	*William Barnes* .	208
Going Away . . .	*Dinah M. Craik* .	210
In Earliest Spring . .	*W. D. Howells* .	212

I

THE DESPONDING AND THE ANXIOUS

It is good to be last not first,
Pending the present distress;
It is good to hunger and thirst,
So it be for righteousness;
It is good to spend and be spent;
It is good to watch and to pray;
Life and death make a goodly Lent,
So it leads us to Easter Day.

CONSIDER THE RAVENS

Lord, according to Thy words,
I have considered Thy birds,
And I find their life good,
And better the better understood :
Sowing neither corn nor wheat,
They have all that they can eat.

Reaping no more than they sow,
They have all that they can stow ;
Having neither barn nor store,
Hungry again, they eat more.

Considering, I see, too, that they
Have a busy life and plenty of play :
In the earth they dig their bills deep,
And work well though they do not heap ;
Then to play in the air they are not loath,
And their nests between are better than both.

But this is when there blow no storms ;
When berries are plenty in winter, and worms ;

When their feathers are thick, and oil is enough
To keep the cold out and the rain off;
If there should come a long, hard frost,
Then it looks as if Thy birds were lost.

But I consider further, and find
A hungry bird has a free mind;
He is hungry to-day, not to-morrow!
Steals no comfort, no grief doth borrow;
This moment is his, Thy will hath said it,
The next is nothing till Thou hast made it.

The bird has pain, but has no fear,
Which is the worst of any gear:
When cold and hunger and harm betide him,
He gathers them not to stuff inside him;
Content with the day's ill he has got,
He waits just, nor haggles with his lot;
Neither jumbles God's will
With dribblets from his own still.

But next I see, in my endeavour,
Thy birds here do not live for ever;
That cold or hunger, sickness or age,
Finishes their earthly stage;
The rook drops without a stroke,
And never gives another croak;
Birds lie here, and birds lie there,
With little feathers all astare;
And in Thy own sermon, Thou
That the sparrow falls dost allow,

It shall not cause me any alarm,
For neither so comes the bird to harm,
Seeing our Father, Thou hast said,
Is by the sparrow's dying bed:
Therefore it is a blessed place,
And the sparrow in high grace.
It cometh therefore to this, Lord:
I have considered Thy word,
And henceforth will be Thy bird.

George Mac Donald.

THE FATHER OF THE FATHERLESS

DORSET DIALECT

As I wer readèn ov a stwone,
In Grenley Church-yard, all alwone,
A little maid ran up, wi' pride
To zee me there; an' push'd aside
A bunch o' bennets, that did hide
A verse her father, as she zaid
Put up above her mother's head,
To tell how much he loved her.

The verse wer short, but very good,
I stood and learn'd en where I stood:
'Mid God, dear Mary, gie me greäce,
To vind, like thee, a better pleäce,
Where I, oonce mwore, mid zee thy feäce,
An' bring thy children up, to know
His word, that they mid come and show
Thy soul how much I loved thee.'

'Where 's father, then,' I zaid, 'my chile?'
'Dead too,' she answer'd wi' a smile:
'An' I an' brother Jem do bide
At Betty White's, o' tother zide
O' road.'—'Mid He, my chile,' I cried,
'That 's father to the fatherless,
Become thy father now, an' bless,
An' keep, an' lead, an' love thee.'

Though she 've a' lost, I thought so much,
Still He don't let the thoughts o 't touch
Her litsome heart, by day or night:
An' zoo, if we could teäke it right,
Do show He 'll meäke His burdens light
To weaker souls; and that His smile
Is sweet upon a harmless chile,
When they be dead that loved it.

William Barnes.

DEFEATED

My darling, O my darling! with the soft sad eyes,
Set like twilight planets in the raining skies,
With the brow all patience and the lips all pain,
Save the curve for kisses—kiss me, love, once again.

My priestess, O my priestess! with the almond bough
That her pale hand holdeth, dry and barren now,
With its crown of blossoms by the rude wind rent,
With the gift God-taken that of God was sent.

Mine empress, O mine empress! with the shatter'd throne,
Is there yet no kingdom we can call thine own?
Is success the only thing the world holds good?
Or is God as man, and could not if He would?

No, no, by all the martyrs, and the dear dead Christ;
By the long bright roll of those whom joy enticed,
With her myriad blandishments, but could not win,
Who would fight for victory, but would not sin;

By these, our elder brothers, who have gone before,
And have left their trail of light upon our shore,
We can see the glory of a seeming shame,
We can feel the fulness of an empty name.

Sarah Williams.

CHRISTMAS BELLS

It chanced upon the merry, merry Christmas Eve,
I went singing past the church, across the moorland dreary,
Oh! never sin, and want, and woe this earth will leave,
And the bells but mark the wailing sound, they sing so cheery.
How long, O Lord! how long before Thou come again?
Still in cellar, and in garret, and on moorland dreary
The orphans moan, and widows weep, aud poor men toil in vain,
Till the earth is sick of hope deferred, though Christmas bells be cheery.
Then arose a joyous clamour from the wild-fowl on the mere,
Beneath the stars, across the snow, like clear bells ringing;
And a voice within cried, Listen! Christmas carols even here!
Though thou be dumb, yet o'er their work the stars and snows are singing.
Blind! I live, I love, I reign; and all the nations through
With the thunder of my judgments even now are ringing;
Do thou fulfil thy work but as yon wild-fowl do,
Thou wilt heed no less the wailing, yet hear through it the angels singing.

Charles Kingsley.

'NOT WITHOUT HOPE'

They say you are not as you were
In days of long ago;
That clouds came o'er your sun at noon,
And dimmed its golden glow.

Yet every gentler word I say,
Each gentler deed I do,
Is but a blossom on the grave
Where sleeps my love for you.

And can a weed bring forth a flower?
Or blight bear beauty? Nay,
This darkness is but short eclipse,
To surely pass away.

Though one by one my early friends
Have faded from my prayer,
Your name was always first and last,
And still it lingers there.

I love but dearer for my fears
And prayers for such an one;
I think God does not love us less
For costing Him His Son.

And I believe when death shall break
This spell of human pain,
The love that I to God intrust
He 'll give to me again.

Isabella Fyvie Mayo.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE

You hear an endless cry that goes
  Lamenting through the sombre air,
Of nations bent with many woes,
  Or gauntly wrestling with despair.
I hear a psalm by myriads sung—
  A psalm that knows no stint nor stay,
And lo! a voice calls old and young
  To be indeed as blest as they.

You watch a life bereft of light,
  For ever wrapt in unthinned gloom,
Whose only tranquil time seems night,
  Whose happiest hope and rest the tomb;
I watch the life and know that God
  So guides the soul to heaven above;
You only see the smiting rod—
  But ah! the Power that smites is Love.

You see a world that wildly whirls
  Through coiling clouds of battle-smoke,
And drench'd with blood the children's curls
  And women's hearts by thousands broke;
I see a host above it all,
  Where angels wield their conquering sword,
And thrones may rise or thrones may fall,
  But comes the kingdom of the Lord.

Alfred Norris.

A CALL TO WANDERING CHILDREN

My blood so red
For thee was shed,
Come home again, come home again,
My own sweet heart, come home again.
You've gone astray
Out of your way,
Come home again, come home again.

From a MS. of the 17th Century, quoted by Charles Stanford, D.D.

AGAINST TEARS

The world is all too sad for tears;
I would not weep, not I,
But smile along my life's short road,
Until I, smiling, die.

The little flowers breathe sweetness out,
Through all the dewy night;
Shall I more churlish be than they,
And plain for constant light?

Not so, not so, no load of woe
Need bring despairing frown;
For while we bear it, we can bear;
Past that, we lay it down.

Sarah Williams.

'THE SUNRISE NEVER FAILED US YET.'

Upon the sadness of the sea
The sunset broods regretfully,
From the far lonely spaces slow
Withdraws the wistful after-glow.

So out of life the splendour dies,
So darken all the happy skies,
So gathers twilight, cold and stern,
But overhead the planets burn.

And up the east another day,
Shall chase the bitter dawn away.
What though our eyes be wet with tears!
The sunrise never failed us yet:

The blush of dawn may yet restore
Our light, and hope, and joy once more.
Sad soul, take comfort, nor forget
That sunrise never failed us yet.

Celia Thaxter.

COME UNTO ME

Heart-broken and weary, where'er thou may'st be,
There are no words like these words for comforting thee;
When sorrows come round thee like waves of the sea,
The Saviour says cheerfully, 'Come unto Me.'

There are no words like these words, 'Come hither and rest';
Afflicted, forsaken, the thorn in thy breast,
All lonely and helpless He thought upon thee.
And He said in His tenderness, 'Come unto Me.'

O Saviour! my spirit would fain be at rest;
There are passions which rage like a storm in my breast,
O show me the road along which I must flee,
And strengthen me, Saviour, to come unto Thee.

There are no words like these words: how blessed they be,
How calming when Jesus says, 'Come unto Me!'
O hear them, my heart, they were spoken to thee,
And still they are calling thee, 'Come unto Me.'

I will walk through the world with these words in my heart,
Through sorrow or sin they shall never depart;
And, when dying, I hope He will whisper to me,
'I have loved thee, and saved thee; come, sinner to Me.'

Edwin Paxton Hood.

WHY ART THOU SORROWFUL?

Why art thou sorrowful, servant of God?
And what is this dulness that hangs o'er thee now?
Sing the praises of Jesus, and sing them aloud,
And the song shall dispel the dark cloud from thy brow.

For is there a thought in the wide world so sweet,
As that God has so cared for us, bad as we are,
That He thinks of us, plans for us, stoops to entreat,
And follows us, wander we ever so far?

Then how can the heart e'er be drooping or sad
Which God hath once touched with the light of His grace?
Can the child have a doubt who but lately hath laid
Himself to repose in his Father's embrace?

And is it not wonderful, servant of God!
That He should have honoured us so with His love:
That the sorrows of life should but shorten the road
Which leads to Himself and the mansion above?

O then, when the spirit of darkness comes down
With clouds and uncertainties into thy heart,
One look to the Saviour, one thought of thy crown,
And the tempest is over, the shadows depart.

That God hath once whispered a word in thine ear
Or sent thee from heaven one sorrow for sin,
Is enough for a life both to banish all fear,
And to turn into peace all the troubles within.

Then why dost thou weep so? For see how time
flies—
The time that for loving and praising was given.
Away with thee, child, then, and hide thy red eyes
In the lap, the kind lap, of thy Father in heaven.

Frederick W. Faber.

RESTING IN GOD'S LOVE

O Lord, how happy is the time
  When in Thy love I rest!
When from my weariness I climb
  Even to Thy tender breast!
The night of sorrow endeth there—
  Thou art brighter than the sun;
And in Thy pardon and Thy care
  The heaven of heavens is won.

Let the world call herself my foe,
  Or let the world allure;
I care not for the world—I go
  To this dear Friend and sure.
And when life's fiercest storms are sent
  Upon life's wildest sea,
My little bark is confident,
  Because it holds by Thee.

When the law threatens endless death
  Upon the awful hill,
Straightway from her consuming breath
  My soul goes higher still:—
Goeth to Jesus wounded, slain,
  And maketh Him her home,
Whence she will not go out again,
  And where death cannot come.

I do not fear the wilderness
Where Thou hast been before,
Nay, rather will I daily press
After Thee, hear Thee more.
Thou art my food; on Thee I lean;
Thou makest my heart sing;
And to Thy heavenly pastures green
All Thy dear flock dost bring.

And if the gate that opens there
Be dark to other men,
It is not dark to those who share
The heart of Jesus then.
That is not losing much of life,
Which is not losing Thee,
Who art as present in the strife
As in the victory.

Therefore how happy is the time
When in Thy love I rest!
When from my weariness I climb
Even to Thy tender breast!
The night of sorrow endeth there—
Thou art brighter than the sun,
And in Thy pardon and Thy care,
The heaven of heavens is won.

TO A MOURNER

Do you know what you are saying?
All the days are dark to you—
Never comes a lift or lightening—
Never strength to smile them through.

Do you know that every lifetime,
Yes, the narrowest and most drear,
Is a cup that still runs over
With the gifts of God most dear?

Do you know that thousands, thousands,
In this world of sin and shame,
Bear a burden to which yours is
But the emptiest, idlest name?

Do you know God's saints are chosen
Oftentimes to suffer sore,
That the crown may be more golden,
When the suffering is o'er?

Do you know He gives them sorrow,
Makes it often sharp and long,
That their voices may be sweeter
When they join the glad 'New Song'?

Do you know the lot He chose Him,
When on earth He drew His breath,
Was the cradle in the manger,—
And the house at Nazareth?

Do you know the path He travell'd
  Firmly, strongly, day by day—
How the thorns and tears commingled
  Till the Cross barr'd up the way?

Do you know how dark the death-cave—
  How she wept there, Magdalene;
Soon how real the Resurrection,
  And the great Ascension Scene?

Yes, you know it; dry your tears, then;
  Cease your mourning, change your ways,
Look for God's high forward meanings;
  His the power and His the praise.

Alfred Norris.

THE DAY IS OVER

The day is over,
The feverish careful day,
Can I recover
Strength that has ebbed away?
Can ever sleep such freshness give,
That I again should wish to live?

Let me lie down,
No more I seek to have
A heavenly crown:
Give me a quiet grave,
Release, and not reward, I ask,—
Too hard for me life's heavy task.

Now let me rest:
Hushed be my striving brain,
My beating breast;
Let me put off my pain,
And feel me sinking, sinking deep
Into an abyss of sleep.

The morrow's noise,
Its anguish, hope, and fear,
Its empty joys,
Of these I shall not hear;
Call me no more, I cannot come,
I'm gone to be at rest at home.

Earth undesired
And not for heaven meet,
In one so tired
What 's left but slumber sweet—
Beneath a grassy mound of trees,
Or at the bottom of the seas?

Yet let me have
Once in a thousand years
Thoughts in my grave;
To know how free from fears
I sleep, and that I there shall lie
Through undisturbed eternity.

And when I wake
Then let me hear above
The birds that make
Songs, not of human love;
Or muffled tones my ear may reach
Of storms that sound from beach to beach.

But, hark! what word
Breathes through the twilight dim?
'Rest in the Lord,
Wait patiently for Him;
Return, O soul, and thou shalt have
A better rest than in thy grave.'

My God, I come:
But I was sorely shaken;
Art Thou my home?
I thought I was forsaken:

I know Thou art a sweeter rest
Than earth's soft side, or ocean's breast.

Yet this my cry:
'I ask no more for heaven;
Now let me die,
For I have vainly striven!'
I had but for that word from Thee
Renounced my immortality.

Now I return,
Return, O Lord, to me,
I cannot earn
That heaven I'll ask of Thee.
But with Thy peace amid the strife
I still can live in hope of life.

The careful day,
The feverish day is over:
Strength ebbed away,
I lie down to recover;
I sleep with Him, I shall be blest,
Whose word has brought my sorrows rest.

T. T. Lynch.

FORSAKEN

Martyrs, through fire and steel,
Have felt the tracking of the steadfast eye
Of faithful friend or kind disciple nigh,
That strengthened them; beside the cruel wheel
Hath woman waited, wiping from a face
Beloved the damps of anguish; Kings in chase,
Upon the mountains held from day to day,
Have leaned on peasants scorning to betray
The baffled hope, the discrownèd: nay,
A hand unseen upon a tyrant's tomb
Hath scatter'd flowers; so strong above disgrace,
Despair and death, rise human hearts; of whom—
King, Martyrs, Malefactors—it is said
That all forsook Him, all forsook and fled,
Save of one only! Human love forsakes,
Yet is not all forsaken! He that takes
This drear pre-eminence of woe alone
Forsaketh never, never! He hath known
That pang too well. O Saviour, with Thine own,
Too little seemed it for Thy love to share
All bitter draughts; so hast Thou bid this cup
Pass from our souls for ever, drinking up
Its wormwood and its gall, our lips to spare.

Dora Greenwell.

THE RIGHT MUST WIN

Oh, it is hard to work for God,
To rise and take His part
Upon this battlefield of earth,
And not sometimes lose heart!

He hides Himself so wondrously,
As though there were no God;
He is least seen when all the powers
Of ill are most abroad.

Or He deserts us at the hour
The fight is all but lost:
And seems to leave us to ourselves
Just when we need Him most.

Yes, there is less to try our faith,
In our mysterious creed,
Than in the godless look of earth,
In these our hours of need.

Ill masters good: good seems to change
To ill with greatest ease;
And, worst of all, the good with good
Is at cross purposes.

The Church, the Sacraments, the Faith,
Their uphill journey take;
Lose here what there they gain, and, if
We lean upon them, break.

It is not so, but so it looks;
And we lose courage then;
And doubts will come if God hath kept
His promises to men.

Ah! God is other than we think:
His ways are far above,
Far beyond reason's height, and reached
Only by childlike love.

The look, the fashion of God's ways,
Love's lifelong study are;
She can be bold, and guess, and act,
When Reason would not dare.

She has a prudence of her own,
Her step is firm and free:
Yet there is cautious Science too
In her simplicity.

Workman of God! oh, lose not heart,
But learn what God is like;
And in the darkest battlefield
Thou shalt know where to strike.

Thrice blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell
That God is on the field when He
Is most invisible.

Blest too is he who can divine
Where real right doth lie,
And dares to take the side that seems
Wrong to man's blindfold eye.

Then learn to scorn the praise of men,
And learn to lose with God;
For Jesus won the world through shame,
And beckons thee His road.

God's glory is a wondrous thing,
Most strange in all its ways;
And, of all things on earth, least like
What men agree to praise.

As He can endless glory weave
From what men reckon shame:
In His own world He is content
To play a losing game.

Muse on His justice, downcast soul,
Muse and take better heart;
Back with thine angel to the field,
And bravely do thy part.

God's justice is a bed, where we
Our anxious hearts may lay;
And, weary with ourselves, may sleep
Our discontent away.

For right is right, since God is God,
And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin.

Frederick W. Faber.

BETTER THINGS

Better to smell the violet cool than to sip the glowing wine;
Better to hark a hidden brook than watch a diamond shine.

Better the love of gentle heart than beauty's favours proud;
Better the rose's living seed than roses in a crowd.

Better to love in loneliness than bask in love all day;
Better the fountain in the heart than the fountain by the way.

Better be fed by mother's hands than eat alone at will;
Better to trust in God than say, My goods my storehouse fill.

Better to be a little wise than in knowledge to abound;
Better to teach a child than love to fill perfection's round.

Better sit at a master's feet than thrill a listening state;
Better suspect that thou art proud, than be sure that thou art great.

Better to walk the realm unseen than watch the
hour's event;
Better the 'Well done' at the last than the air with
shouting rent.

Better to have a quiet grief than a hurrying delight;
Better the twilight of the dawn than the noonday
burning bright.

Better a death when work is done than earth's most
favoured birth;
Better a child in God's great house, than the king
of all the earth.

George Mac Donald.

ALL SAINTS

Saints of the early dawn of Christ,
Saints of imperial Rome,
Saints of the cloistered Middle Age,
Saints of the modern home;
Saints of the soft and sunny East,
Saints of the frozen seas,
Saints of the isles that wave their palms
In the far Antipodes;
Saints of the marts and busy streets,
Saints of the squalid lanes,
Saints of the silent solitudes,
Of the prairies and the plains;
Saints who were wafted to the skies
In the torment robe of flame,
Saints who have graven on men's thoughts
A monumental name;
Come, from the endless peace that spreads
Over the glassy sea;
Come, from the choir with harps of gold,
Harping their melody;
Come, from the home of holiest hope,
Under the altar-throne;
Come, from the depths where the angels see
One Awful Face alone;
Come, from the heights where the Mount of God
Burns like a burnished gem;
Come, from the star-paved terraces
Of the New Jerusalem:

Come, for we fain would hear the notes
  Of your sweet celestial hymn,
And we fain would know what look is theirs
  Who look on the Seraphim ;
Come, for our faith is waxing faint,
  And the lamp of love burns low ;
Come to these lower heavens, and shine,
  That we may see and know ;
Come, for the flash of a moment's space,
  With your snowy wings outspread,
O God-lit cloud of witnesses,
  Souls of the sainted dead.

Edwin Hatch.

MY BIRTHDAY

Beneath the moonlight and the snow
Lies dead my latest year;
The winter winds are wailing low
Its dirges in my ear.

I grieve not with the moaning wind
As if a loss befell;
Before me, even as behind,
God is, and all is well.

His light shines on me from above,
His low voice speaks within,—
The patience of immortal love
Outwearying mortal sin.

Not mindless of the growing years
Of care and loss and pain,
My eyes are wet with thankful tears
For blessings which remain.

If dim the gold of life is grown,
I will not count it dross,
Nor turn from treasures still my own,
To sigh for lack and loss.

The years no charm from Nature take:
As sweet her voices call,
As beautiful her mornings break,
As fair her evenings fall.

Love watches o'er my quiet ways,
Kind voices speak my name,
And lips that find it hard to praise
Are slow, at least, to blame.

How softly ebb the tides of will!
How fields, once lost or won,
Now lie behind me, green and still,
Beneath a level sun!

How hushed the hiss of party hate,
The clamour of the throng!
How old, harsh voices of debate
Flow into rhythmic song!

Methinks the spirit's temper grows
Too soft in this still air,
Somewhat the restful heart foregoes
Of needed watch and prayer.

The bark by tempest vainly tossed,
May founder in the calm;
And he who braved the polar frost
Faint by the isles of balm.

Better than self-indulgent years,
The outflung heart of youth,
Than pleasant songs in idle ears,
The tumult of the truth.

Rest for the weary hands is good,
And love for hearts that pine,
But let the manly habitude
Of upright souls be mine.

Let winds that blow from heaven refresh,
  Dear Lord, the languid air ;
And let the weakness of the flesh
  Thy strength of spirit share.

And, if the eye must fail of light,
  The ear forget to hear,
Make clearer still the spirit's light,
  More fine the inward ear.

Be near me in mine hours of need,
  To soothe, or cheer, or warn ;
And down these slopes of sunset lead
  As up the hills of morn.

John Greenleaf Whittier.

LOSSES

Upon the white sea-sand
There sat a pilgrim band,
Telling the losses that their lives had known,
While evening waned away
From breezy cliff and bay,
And the strong tides went out with weary moan.

One spake, with quivering lip,
Of a fair freighted ship,
With all his household, to the deep gone down!
But one had wilder woe,
For a fair face, long ago
Lost in the darker depths of a great town.

There were who mourned their youth
With a most loving ruth,
For its brave hopes and memories ever green;
And one upon the West
Turned an eye that would not rest
For far-off hills whereon its joy had been.

Some talked of vanished gold,
Some of proud honours told,
Some spake of friends that were their trust no more,
And one of a green grave,
Beside a foreign wave,
That made him sit so lonely on the shore.

But when their tales were done,
There spake among them one,
A stranger, seeming from all sorrow free :—
'Sad losses have ye met,
But mine is heavier yet,
For a believing heart hath gone from me.'

'Alas!' these pilgrims said,
'For the living and the dead,
For fortune's cruelty, for love's sure cross,
For the wrecks of land and sea!
But, howe'er it came to thee,
Thine, stranger, is life's last and heaviest loss.'

Frances Browne.

GOING HOME

We said that the days were evil,
  We felt that they might be few,
For low was our fortune's level,
  And heavy the winters grew;
But one who had no possession
  Looked up to the azure dome,
And said, in his simple fashion,
  'Dear friends, we are going home!

'This world is the same dull market
  That wearied its earliest sage;
The times to the wise are dark yet,
  But so hath been many an age.
And rich grow the toiling nations,
  And red grow the battle spears,
And dreary with desolations
  Roll onward the laden years.

'What need of the changeless story
  Which time hath so often told,
The spectre that follows glory,
  The canker that comes with gold?
That wisdom, and strength, and honour
  Must fade like the far sea foam,
And Death is the only winner;—
  But, friends, we are going home!

'The homes we had hoped to rest in
  Were open to sin and strife,
The dreams that our youth was blest in
  Were not for the wear of life:

For care can darken the cottage,
As well as the palace hearth,
And birthrights are sold for pottage
But never redeemed on earth.

'The springs have gone by in sorrow,
The summers were grieved away,
And ever we feared to-morrow,
And ever we blamed to-day.
In depths which the searcher sounded,
On hills, which the high heart clomb,
Have trouble and toil abounded,—
But, friends, we are going home!

'Our faith was the bravest builder,
But found not a stone of trust:
Our love was the fairest gilder,
But lavished its wealth on dust.
And time hath the fabric shaken
And fortune the clay hath shown,
For much have they changed and taken,
But nothing that was our own.

'The light which to us made baser
The paths which so many choose,
The gifts there was found no place for,
The riches we could not use:
The heart that when life was wintry
Found summer in strain and tome,
With these to our kin and country,—
Dear friends, we are going home!'

Frances Browne.

CONSECRATION

Yet one more step—no flight
The weary soul can bear
Into a whiter light,
Into a hush more rare.

Take me, I am all Thine;
Thine now, not seeking Thee
Hid in the secret shrine,
Lost in the shoreless sea.

Grant to the prostrate soul
Prostration new and sweet;
Make weak the weak, control
Thy creature: at Thy feet

Passive I lie; shine down,
Pierce through the will with straight,
Swift beams one after one;
Divide, disintegrate,

Free me from self, resume
Thy place, and be Thou there,
Yet also keep me. Come,
Thou Saviour and Thou slayer!

Edward Dowden.

WORK AND REST

What have I yet to do?
Day weareth on;
Flowers, that opening new
Smiled through the morning's dew,
Drop in the sun.
'Neath the noon's scorching glare
Fainting I stand:
Still is the sultry air,
Silentness everywhere
Through the hot land.
Yet must I labour still
All the day through,
Striving with earnest will
Patient my place to fill,
My work to do.
Long though my task may be,
Cometh the end;
God 'tis that helpeth me,
His is the work, and He
New strength will lend.
He will direct my feet,
Strengthen my hand,
Give me my portion meet;
Firm in His promise sweet
Trusting I 'll stand.

Up, then, to work again!
God's word is given
That none shall sow in vain,
But find the ripened grain
Garnered in heaven.
Longer the shadows fall,
Night cometh on;
Low voices softly call:
'Come, here is rest for all,
Labour is done!'

FISHERMEN—NOT OF GALILEE

They have toiled all the night, the long, weary night:
They have toiled all the night, Lord, and taken nothing!
The heavens are as brass, and all flesh seems as grass,
Death strikes with horror and life with loathing.

Walk'st Thou by the waters, the dark, silent waters,
The fathomless waters that no line can plumb?
Art Thou Redeemer, or a mere schemer,
Preaching a kingdom that cannot come?

Not a word say'st Thou, no wrath betray'st Thou,
Scarcely delay'st Thou their terrors to lull:
On the shore standing, mutely commanding,
'Let down your nets!'—and they draw them up —full!

* * * * *

Jesus, Redeemer,—Thou sole Redeemer!
I, a poor dreamer, lay hold upon Thee:
Thy will pursuing, though no end viewing,
But simply doing as Thou biddest me.

Though Thee I see not, either light be not,
Or Thou wilt free not the scales from mine eyes,
I ne'er gainsay Thee, but only obey Thee:
Obedience is better than sacrifice.

Though on my prison gleams no open vision,
Walking Elysian by Galilee's tide,
Unseen I feel Thee, and death will reveal Thee:
I shall wake in Thy likeness, satisfied.

Dinah M. Craik.

TO THE END

What do the slow years chant?
'Cold are lover and friend.
Thou art alone, thou art forgot,
Thou hast lived out thy day,
Thy life and love are not,
Why wilt thou longer stay?'
He loveth to the end.

Let the sad years go by,
Homeward their footsteps tend.
Through the poor prayer of failing faith,
Through broken wail and moan,
Hear what the good Word saith:
'For, having loved His own,
He loved them to the end.'

His own were in the world;
World that will break or bend,
Slaughter His own with fire and flood,
Strew ashes over flame,
Drench earth with martyr blood—
Ah! blessed be His name!
He loved them to the end.

Man loves for a summer day,
Slight love is his to lend;
The trivial fashion of an hour,
And then the play is done.
The fading of a flower;
Nor earth nor heaven won.
He loveth to the end.

When storm and tempest rave
O'er the frail earth they rend ;
When the old mountains shake with fear,
And the spirit is dismayed,
O Master ! let me hear,
All trembling and afraid :
'He loveth to the end.'

In the lonely day of death,
When no man may befriend,
When the dark angel standeth nigh,
And the world is past and gone,
Let some voice o'er me cry,
'And having loved his own,
He loved them to the end.'

THE LAMB OF GOD

All in the April evening,
April airs were abroad;
The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road.

The lambs were weary, and crying
With a weak, human cry;
I thought on the Lamb of God
Going meekly to die.

Up in the blue, blue mountains
Dewy pastures were sweet;
Rest for the little bodies,
Rest for the little feet.

But for the Lamb of God,
Up on the hill-top green,
Only a Cross of shame,
Two stark crosses between.

Katharine Tynan.

A PRAYER

I would not ask Thee that my days
Should flow quite smoothly on and on;
Lest I should learn to love the world
Too well, ere all my time was done.

I would not ask Thee that my work
Should never bring me pain nor fear;
Lest I should learn to work alone,
And never wish Thy presence near.

I would not ask Thee that my friends
Should always kind and constant be;
Lest I should learn to lay my faith
In them alone, and not in Thee.

But I would ask Thee still to give,
By night my sleep—by day my bread,
And that the counsel of Thy Word
Should shine and show the path to tread.

And I would ask a humble heart,
A changeless will to work and wake,
A firm faith in Thy Providence,
The rest—'tis Thine to give or take.

Alfred Norris.

CHRISTIAN PATIENCE

I am sitting on the steps of Thy pavilion ;
I am waiting for the coming of the day,
But I know I am but one amongst the million,
And I shall not murmur at the hour's delay.
I know that there are others in December
That are waiting at the gates as well as I,
And my burden is forgot when I remember
The sound of the million's cry.

There is not in the pages of earth's story
A beauty that the laurel less has crowned
Than the patience that has waited for Thy glory
When the winter snows have covered all the ground ;
The meekness that, with folded hands abiding,
Has trusted in the love it cannot see,
And kept amid the chill its lips unhiding,
Has a palm from none but Thee.

How little do we deem that in the attic,
Where the invalid repines not in her pain,
There is seen by Thee a glory more ecstatic
Than the triumph leading captives in its train.
There is seen by Thee a lustre more resplendent
In the patience that refuses to revile,
Than when victor marches home with kings dependent
To bask in a nation's smile.

Thou hast precious gems to count from lane and alley,
When Thou shalt gather jewels from the dust;
Thou hast precious flowers to cull from nook and valley,
When Thou shalt blend the garlands in Thy trust;
Thou hast precious hearts to glean from fields of anguish,
When Thou shalt raise the army of Thy Son,
And the leaders shall be those that did not languish
Till the march of the day was done.

George Matheson.

WOULD YOU BE YOUNG AGAIN?

Would you be young again?
So would not I,
One tear to memory giv'n,
Onward I'd hie.
Life's dark flood forded o'er,
All but at rest on shore,
Say, would you plunge once more
With home so nigh?

If you might, would you now
Retrace your way?
Wander through many wilds,
Faint and astray?
Night's gloomy watches fled,
Morning all beaming red,
Hope's smiles around us shed;
Heavenward—away.

Where are they gone, O you,
My best delight?
Dear and more dear, though now
Hidden from sight.
Where they rejoice to be,
There is the land for me,
Fly, time, fly speedily,
Come life and light.

Baroness Nairne.

II

THE SICK AND THE DYING

Up and away, call the Angels to us,
Come to our home where no foes pursue us,
And no tears bedew us ;

Where that which riseth sets again never,
Where that which springeth flows in a river
For ever and ever ;

Where harvest justifies labour of sowing,
Where that which budded comes to the blowing
Sweet beyond your knowing.

A REVERIE IN SICKNESS

I FANCY I hear a whisper,
As of leaves in a gentle air;
Is it wrong, I wonder, to fancy
It may be the tree up there?
The tree that heals the nations,
Growing amidst the street,
And dropping for who will gather
Its apples at their feet.

I fancy I hear a rushing,
As of waters down a slope;
Is it wrong, I wonder, to fancy
It may be the river of hope?
The river of crystal waters,
That flows from the very throne,
And runs through the street of the city
With a softly jubilant tone.

I fancy a twilight round me,
And a wandering of the breeze,
With a hush in that high city,
And a going in the trees.

But I know there will be no night there,
No coming and going day;
For the holy face of the Father
Will be perfect light alway.

I could do without the darkness,
And better without the sun;
But oh! I should like a twilight,
After the day was done!
Would He lay His hand on His forehead,
On His hair as white as wool,
And shine one hour through His fingers
Till the shadow had made me cool.

But the thought is very foolish;
If that face I did but see,
All else would be all forgotten—
River, and twilight, and tree;
I should seek, I should care for nothing
Beholding His countenance;
And fear only to lose one glimmer
By one single sideway glance.

'Tis again but a foolish fancy,
To picture the countenance so
Which is shining in all our spirits,
Making them white as snow.
Come to me, shine in me, Master,
And I care not for river or tree,
Care for no sorrow or crying,
If only Thou shine in me.

I would lie on my bed for ages,
Looking out on the dusty street,
Where whisper nor leaves, nor waters,
Nor anything cool and sweet,
At my heart this ghastly fainting,
And this burning in my blood,
If only I knew Thou wast with me,
Wast with me and making me good.

George Mac Donald.

PASSING AWAY.

Passing away, saith the world, passing away;
Chances, beauty and youth sapped day by day;
Thy life never continueth in one stay,
Is the eye waxen dim, is the dark hair changing to grey,
That hath won neither laurel nor bay!
I shall clothe myself in Spring and bud in May!
Thou, root-stricken, shalt not rebuild thy decay,
On my bosom for aye:
Then I answered: Yea.

Passing away, saith my soul, passing away;
With its burden of fear and hope, of labour and play,
Hearken what the past doth witness and say!
Rust in thy gold, a moth is in thine array,
A canker is in thy bud, thy leaf must decay.
At midnight, at cockcrow, at morning, one certain day,
Lo, the Bridegroom shall come and shall not delay:
Watch thou and pray:
Then I answered: Yea.

Passing away, saith my God, passing away;
Winter passeth after the long delay:

New grapes on the vine, new figs on the tender spray,
Turtle calleth turtle in Heaven's May.
Though I tarry, wait for me, trust me, watch and pray,
Arise, come away, night is passed and lo it is day,
My love, my sister, my spouse, thou shalt hear me say:
Then I answered: Yea.

Christina G. Rossetti.

THE FLOWER OF THE FLOCK

'This, I am sure, is the flower of the flock!
She stands like a rock in her lilac frock;
She speaks as clear as a cuckoo clock;
The little dear is sweet to hear
And sweet to see—the flower is she—
The flower of the flock in her dear little shoes!'

Now, then, hearken to Heavenly Muse!
First, the metaphor we excuse,
Wishing it better. For what you say—
(Thank Heaven! the children are all away)—
That may be rather more hard to fit,
And Heavenly Muse objects to it.
You are not sage; your patronage
  Vexes the tender household heart,
And ruffles depths you cannot gauge.
  Why do you place this child apart?—
They all are flowers for different hours:
  Pray, mould your praise with a kindlier art.

Ah, what a garden, in need of pardon,
From all but parents whose hearts are warrants,—
Ah, what a garden—pitying powers!—
Is many a garden of parents' flowers!

One of the flowers has a sad club-foot,
And one is blind, and one is mute;
One poor flower has a broken spine;
One is as wicked as Devil's wine;
One was born with but half his wits,
And one is scarred, and one has fits!—
Why, these are pretty flowers indeed
For so much love and gardening heed—
A jest? Yet if you try to laugh,
You find you cannot do it half!
No; all through the long human years
Such gardens are, and it appears
As if the flowers were bright with tears,
That catch the sunshine, and diffuse
A thousand iridescent hues.

No: do not smile at Heavenly Muse,
But mind her. Who are you to choose
This child or that for the flower of the flock?
(The metaphor we do excuse.)
It is not a step, or a voice, or a frock,
Or a sash, or even a pair of shoes
(Not to speak of wit or beauty,
Gentleness, or zeal in duty)
That makes the choice flower in the garden
(Which seems to stand in need of pardon)—
The flower that fairest, sweetest blows.
What is the secret, then? God knows;
And when Love smiles, and says, 'My rose!'
To what might else go derelict,
Who has the heart to contradict?

God makes the love the need to suit;
But for the secret, Love is mute:
She cherishes the thing forlorn—
  She says, 'This mortal is but night!'
She weeps, 'Would God that it were morn,—
  My flower will bloom when it is light!'
The tempered wind around them blows
The secret that God only knows,
And still Love whispers, 'Ah, my rose!'

William Brighty Rands.

WISHES ABOUT DEATH

I WISH to have no wishes left,
  But to leave all to Thee;
And yet I wish that Thou shouldst will
  Things that I wish should be.

And these two wills I feel within
  When on my death I muse;
But, Lord! I have a death to *die*,
  And not a death to choose.

Why should I choose? for in Thy love,
  Most surely I descry
A gentler death than I myself
  Should dare to ask to die.

But Thou wilt not disdain to hear
  What these few wishes are,
Which I abandon to Thy love,
  And to Thy wiser care.

Triumphant death I would not ask,
  Rather would deprecate;
For dying souls deceive themselves
  Soonest when most elate.

All graces I would crave to have,
  Calmly absorbed in one—
A perfect sorrow for my sins,
  And duties left undone.

I would the light of reason, Lord,
Up to the last might shine,
That my own hands might hold my soul
Until it passed to Thine.

And I would pass in silence, Lord,
No brave words on my lips,
Lest pride should cloud my soul, and I
Should die in the eclipse.

But when and where, and by what pain,—
All this is one to me;
I only long for such a death
As most shall honour Thee.

Long life dismays me, by the sense
Of my own weakness scared;
And by Thy grace a sudden death
Need not be unprepared.

One wish is hard to be unwished,—
That I at last might die
Of grief, for having wronged with sin
Thy spotless Majesty.

Frederick W. Faber.

'HAVING A DESIRE TO DEPART'

Eyes she had in whose dark lustre,
  Slumbered wild and mystic beams;
And a brow of polished marble,
  Pale abode of gorgeous dreams.
Dreams that caught the hues and splendours,
  Which the radiant future shows,
For the past was nought but anguish,
  And a sepulchre of woes!
Therefore from its scenes and sorrows,
  All her heart and soul were riven,
And her thoughts kept ever wandering
  With the angels up to heaven.

When they told her of the pleasures,
  Which the future had in store,
When her sorrows would have faded,
  And her anguish would be o'er;
Told her of her wealth and beauty,
  And the triumphs in her train;
Told her of the many others
  Who would sigh for her again,
She but caught one-half their meaning,
  While the rest afar was driven,
'Yes,' she murmur'd, 'they are happy,
  They, I mean, who dwell in heaven!'

When they wish'd once more to see her,
Mingling with the bright and fair,
When they told her of the splendour,
And the rank that would be there;
Told her that amid the glitter
Of that brilliant living sea,
There were none so sought and sighed for,
None so beautiful as she;
Still she heeded not the flattery,
Heard but half the utterance given;
'Yes,' she answer'd, 'there are bright ones,
Many too I know in heaven.'

When they spoke of sunlight glories,
Summer days and moonlit hours;
Told her of the spreading woodland,
With its treasury of flowers;
Clustering fruits, and vales and mountains,
Flower-banks mirror'd in clear springs,
Winds whose music ever mingled
With the hum of glancing wings,
Scenes of earthly bliss and beauty
Far from all her thought were driven,
And she fancied that they told her,
Of the happiness of heaven.

For one master-pang had broken
The sweet spell of her young life,
And henceforth its calm and sunshine
Were as tasteless as its strife;

Henceforth all its gloom and grandeur,
  All the music of its streams,
All its thousand pealing voices,
  Spoke the language of her dreams:
Dreams that wander'd on like orphans,
  From all earthly solace driven,
Searching for their great Protector,
  And the palace gates of heaven.

John Stanyan Bigg.

IN THE JUNE TWILIGHT

In the June twilight, in the soft grey twilight,
The yellow sun-glow trembling through the rainy eve,
As my love lay quiet came the solemn fiat,
'All these things *for ever, for ever,* thou must leave.'

My love she sank down quivering, like a pine in tempest shivering,
'I have had so little happiness yet beneath the sun
I have called the shadow sunshine, and the merest frosty moonshine
I have, weeping, blessed the Lord for, as if daylight had begun.

'Till He sent a sudden angel, with a glorious sweet evangel,
Who turned all my tears to pearl gems, and, crowned *me,*—so little worth,
Me! and through the rainy even changed this poor earth into heaven,
Or, by wondrous revelation brought the heavens down to earth.

'O the strangeness of the feeling! O the infinite revealing,
To think how God must love me, to have made me so content,

Though I would have served Him humbly, and patiently and dumbly,
Without any angel standing in the pathway that I went.'

In the June twilight—in the lessening twilight,
My love cried from my bosom an exceeding bitter cry,
'Lord, wait a little longer, until my soul is stronger,
Wait till Thou hast taught me to be content to die.'

Then the tender face, all woman, took a glory superhuman,
And she seemed to watch for something or see some I could not see,
From my arms she rose full statured, all transfigured, queenly featured,
'As Thy will is done in heaven, so on earth still let it be.'

* * * * *

I go lonely, I go lonely, and I feel that earth is only
The vestibule of palaces whose courts we never win;
Yet I see my palace shining, where my love sits amaranths twining,
And I know the gates stand open, and I shall enter in.

Dinah M. Craik.

A SONG OF THE RIVER

Many waters go softly dreaming
On to the sea;
But the River of Death floweth softest
By tower and tree.

By smiling village and meadow,
In the morning light:
By palace gate and by cottage
In the dim hush of night.

No sigh when the wistful moonlight
Seeks that cold breast—
No smile when the gold of Sunset
Burns in the west—

No rush of the mournful waters
Breaks on the ear,
To tell us when life is strongest
That death flows near.

But through throbbing hearts of cities,
In the heat of the day,
The cool dark River passeth,
On its silent way.

And where the Good Shepherd leadeth
To pastures green,
Ever the dark 'still waters'
Of death are seen.

This is the River that 'follows'
Where'er we go;
No sand so dry and thirsty
But these strange waters flow.

To fainting men in the desert
No *living* streams appear:
But the waters of Death rise softly,
Solemn and clear.

And down to the silent River,
By night and day,
Old men and maidens wander ever,
And pass away.

Some go with the voice of thanksgiving
And melody,
And some in silence at midnight,
When none are by.

Some go where the smiling meadows
Sweep to the River-side,
And the pale sweet flowers are blowing
Close to the solemn tide.

And some are summoned at midnight,
To cross in haste,
Where the banks are steep and frowning,
And the land lies waste.

No tender smiling of sunset,
No pale death-flowers
Which can make the banks of the River sweet
In dying hours;

Only a sudden leaping
From the frowning height,
To the cold dark breast of the River—
And then the silence of night.

Many waters go softly dreaming
On to the sea,
But the River of Death floweth softest
To thee and me.

We have trod the sands of the desert
Under a burning sun;
Oh, sweet will the touch of the waters be
To feet whose journey is done!

Unto Him whose love has washed us
Whiter than snow,
We shall pass through the shallow River
With hearts aglow.

For the Lord's voice on the Waters
Lingereth sweet:
'He that *is* washed needeth only
To wash his feet.'

B. M.

'WIND ME A SUMMER CROWN,' SHE SAID

'Wind me a Summer Crown,' she said,
'And set it on my brows;
For I must go while I am young
Home to my Father's house.

And make me ready for the day,
And let me not be stayed;
I would not linger on the way
As if I was afraid.

O! will the golden courts of heaven,
When I have paced them o'er,
Be lovely as my lily walks,
Which I must see no more?

And will the seraph hymns and harps,
When they have filled my ear,
Be tender as my mother's voice
Which I must never hear?'

Your mother's tones shall reach you still,
Even sweeter than they were,
And the false love that broke your heart
Shall be forgotten there.

And not of star or flower is born
The beauty of that shore:
There is a Face which you shall see,
And wish for nothing more.

Menella Bute Smedley.

PARADISE

It's, oh, in Paradise that I fain would be,
Away from care and weariness, and all beside:
Earth is too full of loss with its dividing sea,
But Paradise upbuilds the bower for the bride.

Where flowers are yet in bud, while the boughs are green,
I would get quit of earth, and get robed for heaven;
Putting on my raiment white within the screen,
Putting on my crown of gold whose gems are seven.

Fair is the fourfold river that maketh no moan,
Fair are the trees, fruit-bearing, of the wood,
Fair are the gold and bdellium and the onyx stone,
And I know the gold of that land is good.

O my love, my dove, lift up your eyes
Toward the eastern gate like an opening rose
You and I who parted will meet in Paradise,
Pass within and sing when the gates unclose.

This life is but the passage of a day,
This life is but a pang and all is over,
But in the life to come which fades not away
Every love shall abide and every lover.

He who wore out pleasure and mastered all lore,
Solomon, wrote 'Vanity of vanities';
Down to death, of all that went before,
In his mighty long life the record is this.

With loves by the hundred, wealth beyond measure,
Is this he who wrote 'Vanity of vanities!'
Yea, 'Vanity of vanities,' he saith of pleasure,
And of all he learned set his seal to this.

Yet we love and faint not, for our love is one,
And we hope and flag not, for our hope is sure,
Although there be nothing new beneath the sun,
And no help for life, and for death no cure.

The road to death is life, the gate of life is death,
We who wake shall sleep, we shall wax who wane;
Let us not vex our souls for stoppage of a breath,
The fall of a river that turneth not again.

Be the road short and be the gate near,—
Shall a short road tire, a strait gate appal?
The loves that meet in Paradise shall cast out fear
And Paradise hath room for you, and me, and all.

Christina G. Rossetti.

DOMINUS ILLUMINATIO MEA

In the hour of death, after this life's whim,
When the heart beats low, and the eyes grow dim,
And pain has exhausted every limb—
The lover of the Lord shall trust in Him.

When the will has forgotten the lifelong aim,
And the mind can only disgrace its fame,
And a man is uncertain of his own name—
The power of the Lord shall fill this frame.

When the last sigh is heaved, and the last tear shed,
And the coffin is waiting beside the bed,
And the widow and child forsake the dead—
The angel of the Lord shall lift this head.

For even the purest delight may pall,
The power must fail, and the pride must fall,
And the love of the dearest friends grow small—
But the glory of the Lord is all in all.

R. D. B.

'I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS'

I AM pale with sick desire,
For my heart is far away
From this world's fitful fire
And this world's waning day;
In a dream it overleaps
A world of tedious ills
To where the sunshine sleeps
On the everlasting hills.
Say the saints: There angels ease us
Glorified and white.
They say: We rest in Jesus
Where is not day or night.

My soul saith: I have sought
For a home that is not gained,
I have spent yet nothing bought,
Have laboured but not attained;
My pride strove to mount and grow,
And hath but dwindled down;
My love sought love, and lo!
Hath not attained its crown.
Say the saints: Fresh souls increase us,
None languish or recede.
They say: We love our Jesus,
And He loves us in deed.

I cannot rise above,
I cannot rest beneath.
I cannot find out love,
Or escape from death.
Dear hopes and joys gone by
Still mock me with a name;
My best beloved die,
And I cannot die with them.
Say the saints: No deaths decrease us
Where our rest is glorious.
They say: We live in Jesus,
Who once died for us.

O my soul, she beats her wings
And pants to fly away
Up to immortal things
In the heavenly day.
Yet she flags and almost faints;
Can such be meant for me?
Come and see, say the saints.
Saith Jesus, Come and see.
Say the saints: His pleasures please us
Before God and the Lamb.
Come and taste my sweets, saith Jesus;
Be with me where I am.

Christina G. Rossetti.

'COMPLETE IN HIM'

Dear Lord, it is better that I
Should go through the world with one eye,
If Thou, Light and Guide, be but nigh.

It is better, O Saviour divine,
To lose this right hand of mine,
If Thou hold but the other in Thine.

Thou only canst make me complete;
And to limp by Thy side were more sweet
Than walking alone on both feet.

Joseph A. Torrey.

THROUGH THE GATES

Good-bye, ah, good-bye; you are going
To enter the Silent Land,
And your life is vanishing from me,
Though fast I hold your hand.
Your head on my bosom will lie, love,
Clasp'd in a close embrace,
But where will your soul be wandering,
When your breath fails off my face?

The Silent Land! Hark, how music
Thrills through the sweeten'd air!
It is surely sounding from heaven,
Unknown to us otherwhere.
A far-off journey! kind angels
Stand reaching to me their hand:
It is but a step and a step-lift
From the earth on which you stand.

Is the parting, then, so complete, love?
Perhaps you may come again,
And give me some word or token
That you, though changed, are the same:
A whisper in evening stillness,
A vision in broad, bright day,
A touch as of long-trail'd garments,
Soft-touching and floating away.

I know not. But bid me good-bye now,
As going at night to my room,
If I may I will open the door, love,
And call to you out of the gloom.
If I may not, the Lord is our keeper,
And we are still in His care;
You on earth, I in heaven—both guarded,
Both safe, till you follow me there.

Alfred Norris.

A GOOD CONFESSION

[Suggested by hearing of a tombstone in a country churchyard in Wales, on which was inscribed the name of a man who had lived to some years above eighty, yet was said to be (alluding to his conversion to Christ) only 'four years old when he died.']

If you ask me how long I have been in the world,
I 'm old, I 'm very old;
If you ask me how many years I 've lived, it 'll very
soon be told,
Past eighty years of age, yet only four years old!

Eighty years and more astray upon the mountains
high,
In a land that 's full of pits and snares, and that 's
desolate and dry,
I 've oft been weary, oft been cold, and oft been like
to die;

And there I 'd have wandered, wandered still, as I
wandered many a day;
I 'd lose the track-marks of the flock, I 'd got so far
away,
If Jesus had not met me, that seeks for them that
stray.

The Shepherd took me in His arms, for you see I 'm
getting old,
And my strength is, as the Psalmist says, gone like
a tale that 's told ;
' And other sheep,' the Shepherd says, ' I have, and
to the fold

' Them also must I bring,' for He has many little
lambs,
All milk-white, mild, and innocent, a-skipping by
their dams ;
And many sheep that have been driven along the
dusty roads,
Hard driven along by dogs and men, and pricked
with iron goads,

And marked with iron brands to show they 've oft
been bought and sold ;
Brown, ragged sheep, with fleeces torn, and faces
wizened and old ;

And if you ask me which of these I think He loves
the best—
The lambs or sheep—I cannot say ; He 'll love me
with the rest.
For ' Feed My little lambs,' He said, when He gave
His flock to keep
To Peter once, and twice He said to Peter, ' Feed
My sheep.'

He 's got a garden full of flowers, all planted row by row,
Roses and pinks and mignonette a-coming into blow,
And many little pleasant herbs that near each other grow;
Balm o' Gilead, mint and thyme, and sage and marjorie,
And many a dry old stick and stalk, and many a withered tree,
That 's neither good for use nor show, and these are folks like me;

And many such-like ones He 's got, but scripture sayeth, 'Lo!
He taketh such and maketh them to flourish and to grow.'
For He 's not a man that He should judge by seeing of His eyes,
He 's not a son of man that He should any one despise,
He 's God Himself, and far too kind for that, and far too wise.

He 's God Himself, come down from Heaven to raise us when we fall;
He 's come to heal us when we 're sick, to hear us when we call;
If He hadn't come to do us good, He wouldn't have come at all.

And 'Ask,' He says, 'and I will give, and knock, and I to you
Will open,' Jesus says to us, and I know that it is true:
It isn't Him would say the things He doesn't mean to do.

He didn't come to judge the world, He didn't come to blame,
He didn't only come to seek, it was to save He came.
And when we call Him Saviour, then we call Him by His name.

He sought for me when I was lost, He brought me to His fold;
He doesn't look for much from me, for He doesn't need be told
I'm past eighty years of age, and yet but four years old.

Dora Greenwell.

A BALLAD OF TREES AND THE MASTER

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him,
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last;
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last
When out of the woods He came.

Sidney Lanier.

PEACE

My soul, there is a countrie,
  Afar beyond the stars,
Where stands a wingèd sentrie
  All skilful in the wars.
There, above noise and danger,
  Sweet peace sits crowned with smiles,
And One born in a manger
  Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious Friend,
  And (O my soul, awake !)
Did in pure love descend,
  To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
  There grows the flower of peace,
The Rose that cannot wither,
  Thy fortresse and thy ease.
Leave, then, thy foolish ranges,
  For none can thee secure,
But one who never changes—
  Thy God, thy Life, thy Cure.

Henry Vaughan.

POOR ELLEN

'Tis hard to *die* in spring-time,
When, to mock our bitter need,
All life around runs over
In its fulness without heed.
New life for tiniest twig on tree,
New worlds of honey for the bee,
And not one drop of dew for me,
Who perish as I plead.

'Tis *hard* to die in spring-time,
When it stirs the poorest clod,
The wee wren lifts its little head
In lusty songs to God.
And summer comes with conquering march,
Her banners waving 'neath the arch
Of heaven, where I lie and parch,
Left dying by the road.

'Tis hard to die in spring-time,
When the long blue days unfold,
And cowslip-coloured sunsets
Grow like Heaven's own heart, pure gold.
Each breath of balm brings wave on wave
Of new life that would lift and lave
My life, whose feel is of the grave
And mingling with the mould.

But sweet to die in spring-time,
When these lustres of the sward,
And all the breaks of beauty
Wherewith earth is daily starred,
For me are but the outside show,
All leading to the unseen glow
Of that strange world to which I go,
For ever with the Lord.

O sweet to die in spring-time,
When I reach the promised Rest,
And feel His arm is round me,
Know I sink back on His breast:
His kisses close these poor dim eyes;
Soon shall I hear Him say, 'Arise!'
And springing up with glad surprise,
Shall know Him and be blest.

'Tis sweet to die in spring-time
For I feel my golden year
Of summer-time eternal
Is beginning even here!
'Poor Ellen!' now you say and sigh,
'Poor Ellen!' and to-morrow I
Shall say, 'Poor mother!' and from the sky
Watch *you* and wait you there.

Gerald Massey.

WE SHALL RISE AGAIN

Oh that the keys of our hearts the angels would
bear in their bosoms,
For revelation fades and fades away,
Dreamlike becomes, and dim and far withdrawn,
And evening comes to find the soul a prey
That was caught up to vision at the dawn.
Sword of the Spirit—still it sheathes in rust,
And lips of prophecy are sealed with dust.

High lies the better country,
The land of morning and perpetual spring;
But graciously the warder,
Over its mountain border,
Leans to us, beckoning—bids us 'Come up hither.'
And though we climb with step unfixed and slow,
From visionary heights of hope we look off thither,
And we must go.

And we shall go! and we shall go!
We shall not always weep and wander so,
Not always in vain,
By merciful pain,
Be upcast from the hell we seek again!
How shall we
Whom the stars draw so, and the uplifting sea,—
Answer, thou secret heart! How shall it be
With all His infinite promising in thee?

Beloved! beloved! not cloud and fire alone
From bondage and the wilderness restore,
And guide the wandering spirit to its own,
But all His elements they go before.
Upon its way the seasons bring,
And hearten with foreshadowing,
The resurrection wonder:
What lands of death awake to sing,
And germs of hope swell under!
And full and fine, and full and fine,
The day distils life's golden wine,
And night is Palace Beautiful, Peace chambered;
All things are ours, and life fills up of them
Such measure as we hold;
For ours beyond the gate,
The deep things, the untold,
We only wait.

PARADISE

Once in a dream I saw the flowers
That bud and bloom in Paradise;
More fair they are than waking eyes
Have seen in all this world of ours.
And faint the perfume-bearing rose,
And faint the lily on its stem,
And faint the perfect violet,
Compared with them.

I heard the songs of Paradise:
Each bird sat singing in his place;
A tender song so full of grace,
It soared like incense to the skies.
Each bird sat singing to his mate,
Soft loving notes among the trees;
The nightingale herself were cold
To such as these.

I saw the fourfold river flow,
And deep it was, with golden sand:
It flowed between a mossy land
With murmured music, grave and low.
It hath refreshment for all thirst,
For fainting spirits strength and rest;
Earth holds not such a draught as this
From east to west.

The Tree of Life stood budding there,
Abundant with its twelvefold fruits;
Eternal sap sustains its roots,
Its shadowy branches fill the air.
Its leaves are healing for the world,
Its fruit the hungry world can feed,
Sweeter than honey to the taste,
And balm indeed.

I saw the gate called Beautiful;
And looked, but scarce could look within;
I saw the golden streets begin,
And outskirts of the glassy pool.
Oh harps, oh crowns of plenteous stars,
Oh green palm branches many-leaved—
Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard,
Nor heart conceived.

I hope to see these things again,
But not as once in dreams by night;
To see them with my very sight,
And touch and handle and attain;
To have all heaven beneath my fee
For narrow way that once they trod;
To have my part with all the saints,
And with my God.

Christina G. Rossetti.

SWEET DEATH

The sweetest blossoms die.
And so it was that, going day by day
Unto the church to praise and pray,
And crossing the green churchyard thoughtfully,
I saw how on the graves the flowers
Shed their fresh leaves in showers,
And how their perfume rose up to the sky
Before it passed away.

The youngest blossoms die;
They die and fall and nourish the rich earth
From which they lately had their birth.
Sweet life! but sweeter death, that passeth by,
And is as though it had not been!
All colours turn to green:
The bright hues vanish, and the odours fly,
The grass hath lasting worth.

And youth and beauty die.
So be it, O my God, Thou God of Truth:
Better than beauty and than youth
Are saints and angels, a glad company;
And Thou, O Lord, our Rest and Ease,
Art better far than these.
Why should we shrink from our full harvest? Why
Prefer to glean with Ruth?

Christina G. Rossetti.

MOTHER COUNTRY

Oh! what is that country,
And where can it be,
Not mine own country,
But dearer far to me?
Yet mine own country,
If I one day shall see
Its spices and cedars
Its gold and ivory.

As I lie dreaming
It rises, that land;
There rises before me
Its green golden strand,
With the bowing cedars
And the shining sand;
It sparkles and flashes
Like a shaken brand.

Do angels lean nearer
While I lie and long?
I see their soft plumage
And catch their windy song
Like the rise of a high tide
Sweeping full and strong,
I heard the outskirts
Of their reverend throng.

Oh! what is a king here,
Or what is a boor?
Here all starve together,
All dwarfèd and poor.
Here Death's hand knocketh
At door after door,
He thins the dancers
From the festal floor.

Oh! what is a handmaid,
Or what is a queen?
All must lie down together
Where the turf is green.
The foulest face hidden,
The fairest not seen:
Gone as if never
They had breathèd or been.

Gone from sweet sunshine
Underneath the sod,
Turned from warm flesh and blood
To senseless clod.
Gone as if never
They had toilèd or trod,
Gone out of sight of all
Except our God.

Shut into silence
From the accustomed song;
Shut into solitude
From all earth's throng.

Run down though swift of foot,
  Thrust down though strong ;
Life made an end of,
  Seemed it short or long.

Life made an end of,
  Life but just begun ;
Life finished yesterday,
  Its last sand run :
Life new-born with the morrow,
  Fresh as the sun ;
While done is done for ever :
  Undone, undone.

And if that life is life,
  This is but a breath,
The passage of a dream
  And the shadow of death ;
But a vain shadow
  If one considereth ;
Vanity of vanities,
  As the Preacher saith.

Christina G. Rossetti.

AT LAST

When on my day of life the night is falling,
And, in the winds from unsunned spaces blown,
I hear far voices out of darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown,

Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant,
Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
O Love divine, O Helper ever present,
Be Thou my strength and stay!

Be near me when all else is from me drifting—
Earth, sky, home's pictures, days of shade and shine,
And kindly faces to my own uplifting
The love which answers mine.

I have but Thee, O Father: let Thy Spirit
Be with me then to comfort and uphold;
No gate of pearl, no branch of palm, I merit,
Nor street of shining gold.

Suffice it if—my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace—
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place:

Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,
And flows for ever through heaven's green expansions
The river of Thy peace.

There, from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find, at last, beneath Thy tree of healing,
The life for which I long.

John Greenleaf Whittier.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

'How went the Day?' you say.
'Truly the sun arose,
Bright with unhindered heat;
Soon came the bitter blows
Of hailstone and storming sleet:
Falling in heaps they froze
Fast in the field and the street.'
'Ah, my friend! nearer the end:
Nearer than ever to-night, my friend.'

'How went the Heart?' you say.
'Calm as a windless sea:
But with a fiendish speed
Here came temptations three,
Luring me on to heed:
Then it was stern to be
The reiner of that heart's greed.'
'Ah, my friend! nearer the end:
Nearer than ever to-night, my friend.'

'How went the Work?' you say.
'Lightsome enough for a while,
Lightsome with song and jest.
Soon came the frown for the smile,
Half a curse for the toil's behest;
But I strove against glamour and guile,
And I know I was not unblest.'
'Ah, my friend! nearer the end:
Nearer than ever to-night, my friend.'

'How went Heaven?' you say.
'Truly it came to me,
Faint as a dawn in my soul:
Then brightening fair and free
To a noontide splendour whole,
Till it was a bliss to be
So near to my heart's one goal.'
'Ah, my friend! nearer the end:
Nearer than ever to-night, my friend.'

'Nearer the end?' you say.
'Yes; I am glad to think
How as I lie in the night,
Close to the dim sleep-brink,
There is nothing before my sight
To cause me to sigh or shrink,
If I float at once to God's light:
He, my friend, stands at the end:
Nearer to Christ to-night, my friend.'

Alfred Norris.

OUT OF THE BODY TO GOD

Wearily, wearily, wearily,
Sobbing through space like a south wind,
Floating in limitless ether,
Ether unbounded, unfathomed,
Where is no upward nor downward,
Island, nor shallow, nor shore:
Wearily floating and sobbing,
Out of the body to God!

Lost in the spaces of blankness,
Lost in the deepening abysses,
Haunted and tracked by the past:
No more sweet human caresses,
No more the springing of morning,
Never more from the present
Into a future beguiled:
Lonely, defiled, and despairing,
Out of the body to God!

Reeling, and tearless, and desperate,
On through the quiet of ether,
Helpless, alone, and forsaken,
Faithless in ignorant anguish,
Faithless of gasping repentance,
Measuring Him by thy measure,—
Measure of need and desert,
Out of the body to God!

Soft through the starless abysses,
Soft as the breath of the summer
Loosens the chains of the river,
Sweeping it free to the sea,
Murmurs a murmur of peace:
'Soul! in the deepness of heaven
Findest thou shallow or shore!
Hast thou beat madly on limit,
Hast thou been stayed in thy fleeing
Out of the body to God?

'Thou that hast known Me in spaces
Boundless, untraversed, unfathomed,
Hast thou not known Me in love?
Am I, Creator and Guider,
Less than thy kingdom and work?
Come, O thou weary and desolate!
Come to the heart of thy Father,
Home from thy wanderings weary,
Home from the lost to the Loving,
Out of the body to God!'

TO A YOUNG GIRL DYING

This is Palm-Sunday. Mindful of the day,
I bring Palm-branches, found upon my way;
But these will wither, thine shall never die,
The sacred palms thou bearest to the sky!
Dear little saint, though but a child in years,
Older in wisdom than my gray compeers!
We doubt and tremble, *we* with bated breath
Talk of this mystery of life and death:
Thou, strong in faith, and gifted to conceive
Beyond thy years, and teach us to believe!

Then take thy palms triumphal to thy home,
Gentle white palmer, never more to roam!
Only, sweet sister, give me, ere thou go'st
Thy benediction,—for my love thou know'st;
We, too, are pilgrims, travelling towards the shrine:
Pray that our pilgrimage may end like thine!

T. W. Parsons.

THE PATHS OF DEATH

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!
  Like the bright slanting west,
Thou leadest down into the glow
Where all those heaven-bound sunsets go,
  Ever from toil and rest.

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!
  Back to our own dear dead,
Into that land which hides in tombs
The better part of our old homes,
  'Tis there thou mak'st our bed.

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!
  Thither where sorrows cease,
To a new life, to an old past,
Softly and silently we haste
  Into a land of peace.

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!
  Thy new restores our lost;
There are voices of the new times,
With the ringing of the old chimes,
  Blent sweetly on thy coast.

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!
  One faint for want of breath;

And above thy promise thou hast given,
All we find more than all in heaven,
O thou truth-speaking Death!

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!
E'en children after play
Lie down without the least alarm,
And sleep in thy maternal arm
Their little life away.

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!
E'en grown-up men secure
Better manhood, by a brave leap
Though the chill mist of thy thin sleep,
Manhood that will endure.

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!
The old, the very old,
Smile when their slumbrous eye grows dim,
Smile when they feel thee touch each limb:
Their age was not less cold.

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!
Ever from pain to ease;
Patience, that hath held on for years,
Never unlearns her humble fears
Of terrible disease.

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!
From sin to pleasing God:
For the pardoned in thy land are bright
As innocence in robe of white,
And walk on the same road.

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!
Straight to our Father's Home:
All loss were gain that gained us this,
The Light of God, that single bliss
Of the grand world to come.

How pleasant are thy paths, O Death!
Ever from toil to rest,—
Where a rim of sea-like splendour runs,
Where the days bury their golden suns
In the dear, hopeful west.

Frederick W. Faber.

'TALITHA CUMI.'

Maiden to my twelfth year come,
I had read a Scripture story
Of a damsel, cold and dumb,
Wakened by the Lord of glory;
And it seemed to me He spoke,
And His living word thrilled through me,
Till in me new life awoke,
When He said, 'Talitha cumi.'

I had to my chamber gone,
Eyes all swoll'n and red with weeping;
For my heart was like a stone,
And my life a dream in sleeping.
Jesus in my chamber stood,
Jesus stretched His hands out to me,—
Hands all pierced, and dropping blood!
And He said, 'Talitha cumi.'

Friends and neighbours gathered in,
Made no small ado, and weeping:
Dead I was; yes, dead in sin;
Dead; but I was only sleeping.
For Thy word upraised me, Lord,
Freed from the disease that slew me;
And to pious friends restored,
Crowned with Thy 'Talitha cumi.'

Now with lamp I watch and wait
For my Lord's returning to me;
Should I slumber when 'tis late,
Let that word rouse and renew me:
And when long laid in the tomb,
Long forgot by all who knew me,
Thou wilt not forget to come,
With Thy sweet 'Talitha cumi.'

W. B. Robertson.

BURY ME IN KIRKBRIDE[1]

Bury me in Kirkbride,
Where the Lord's redeemed anes lie!
The auld kirkyard on the green hillside,
Under the open sky—
Under the open sky,
On the breist o' the brae sae steep,
And side by side wi' the banes that lie
Streiked there in their hinmost sleep.
This puir dune body maun sune be dust,
But it thrills wi' a stound o' pride,
To ken it will mix wi' the great and just
That are buried in thee—Kirkbride.

Wheesh't! Did the saft wind speak?
Or a yammerin' nicht-bird cry?
Did I dream that a warm hand touched my cheek,
And a winsome face gaed by?—
And a winsome face gaed by?
Wi' a far-aff licht in its een—
A licht that bude come frae the dazzlin' sky,
For it spak' o' the sternies' sheen.

[1] 'There is near Sanquhar, in a lonely little glen on a steep hillside, the ruin of a small church called Kirkbride, within and around which are buried a number of the old Covenanters, among them the "Black Macmichael," a famed swordsman who crossed weapons successfully with the "bluidy Clavers." The spot is sacred to the people. The soughing of the wind on a summer Sabbath seems the sound of psalms. An old man when he was dying said, "Bury me in Kirkbride, for there's much of God's redeemed dust lies there," and on this saying the verses are founded.'—*Dr. John Ker.*

Age may be donnert and dazed and blin',
But I 'll warrant, whate'er betide,
A true heart there made tryst wi' my ain,
And the tryst word was—Kirkbride!

Hark! frae the far hill-taps,
And laigh frae the lanesome glen,
A sweet psalm tune like a late dew draps
Its wild notes doon the wind;—
Its wild notes doon the wind,
Wi' a kent soun' ower my mind,
For we sang 't on the muir—a wheen huntit men
Wi' our lives in our hand lang syne;
But naething on earth can disturb this sang,
Were it Clavers in a' his pride,
For it 's raised by the Lord's ain ransomed thrang
Foregathered abune Kirkbride.

I hear May Moril's tongue
That I wistna to hear again,
And there 'twas the Black Macmichael's sang
Clear in the closin' strain—
Clear in the closin' strain,
Frae his big heart bauld and true;
It stirs my soul as in days bygane,
When his guid braidsword he drew:
I needs maun be aff to the moors ance mair,
For he 'll miss me by his side;
In the thrang o' the battle I aye was there,
And sae maun it be in Kirkbride.

Rax me my staff and plaid,
That in readiness I may be,
And dinna forget that *The Book* be laid
Open across my knee—
Open across my knee,
And a text close by my thoom;
And tell me true, for I scarce can see
That the words are 'Lo, I come!'
Then carry me through at the Cample Ford,
And up the lang hillside;
And I 'll wait for the comin' o' God the Lord
In a neuk o' the auld Kirkbride.

Robert Wanlock Reid.

THE TAKEN TO THE LEFT

No; it is not dying
  Thus to fall asleep
As the work-day closes,
  And the shadows deep
Tell of rest arriving,
  Slumbers long and light,
With a still lamp burning
  In the heart of night.

No; it is not dying:
  We are both with Him
Who is Lord of all the worlds,
  Whether bright or dim.
If we sleep or if we wake
  We will keep our tryst,
When the Sign upon the sky
  Brings the Day of Christ.

No; it is not dying:
  Sure, unwearied arms
Are beneath me, saving
  From the last alarms.
I am sinking thither,
  Very full of rest,
As a bird with broken wings
  Sinks into its nest.

W. R. N.

UNFULFILLED

I AM dying, O Lord! I am dying,
Brain fire, with my feet in the snow;
My limbs all a-trembling are lying
Awaiting their pitiless foe—
He comes, rushes Fever to blind me,
A bloodhound with poisonous breath:
I hear him, his steps are behind me;
I feel them, those fangs that are death.

The words that I utter are madness,
The silence I keep is despair,
All whispers of hope and of gladness
Have died as they fell through the air:
No friendship, no love can avail me,
No hand but it burns on my brain,
My pulses like demons assail me,
My strength is the slave to my pain.

All spells of religion and duty,
All manhood and manhood's desire,
All pureness and wisdom and beauty,
Are scorched and burned up in the fire;
And the ladder of Jacob, the dreamer,
No longer is stretched from above,
Yet still, O my Lord! my Redeemer!
I cling, I have root in your love!

I must die, like a deed unrecorded,
Like a bud to be never a flower;
The knowledge, the truths I have hoarded,
Must fade like a spark in the shower;
A fragment, a blot, a negation
For ever my life must remain;
But the spark you have quenched at creation,
O Lord! you can fire it again.

What matter whose lips shall proclaim it,
If only the Truth shall go free?
What recks it whose fervour shall frame it,
The pæan forbidden to me?
I care not, the Present may scoff me,
The Future forget my renown;
Take, take the white garment from off me,
And give to another my crown!

DYING

Tender, airiest spirit,
Naked, fair, alone,
True as softest melody's
Sweetest undertone,
Tell me, dost thou shiver
At the purpling wave
Of the misty river?
Good my soul, be brave!

Starry glimpses often
Doth that mist unfold,
Oft its splendorous edges
Burn with rose and gold.
Oft those sparkling tiars
Angels o'er it wave,
Gemmed with rainbow fires:
Good my soul, be brave!

Thousands true it scorcheth,
Flaming naphthaline;
Thousands more it healeth,
Balmed with anodyne.
And the noblest ever
Love their lives to lave
In the gloomy river:
Good my soul, be brave!

Life, and Truth, and Wisdom
  Dwell o'er yonder tide ;
And a tranquil stillness,
  To our world denied ;
And each holy spirit,
  Whom our God doth save,
Those bright homes doth herit :
  Good my soul, be brave !

F. W. F.

VESPERS

When I have said my quiet say,
When I have sung my little song,
How sweetly, sweetly dies the day,
The valley and the hills along;
How sweet the summons, 'Come away,'
That calls me from the busy throng!

I thought beside the water's flow
Awhile to lie beneath the leaves,
I thought in autumn's harvest glow
To rest my head upon the sheaves;
But, lo! methinks the day was brief
And cloudy; flower, nor fruit, nor leaf
I bring, and yet accepted, free,
And blest, my Lord, I come to Thee.

What matter now for promise lost,
Through blast of Spring or Summer rain;
For broken hopes and wasted pains;
What if the olive little yields,
What if the grape be blighted? Thine
The corn upon a thousand fields,
Upon a thousand hills the vine.

Thou lovest still the poor: oh, blest
In poverty beloved to be!
Less lowly is my choice confess'd,
I love the best in loving Thee!
My spirit bare before Thee stands,
I bring no gift, I ask no sign,
I come to Thee with empty hands,
The surer to be filled from Thine!

Dora Greenwell.

III

THE BEREAVED

She is gone, and what is it we miss
In the many we meet?
A scent, or a smile, or the kiss
That she sent on the air, or a wave
Of her hand as she passed—but the street
Seems as still as the grave.

Dear are the blossoms
For bride's or maiden's head,
But dearer planted
Around our blessed dead.
Those mind us of decay
And joys that fade away;
These preach to us perfection,
Long love, and resurrection.
We make our graveyards fair,
For spirit-like birds of air,
For angels may be finding there
Lost Eden's own delection.

A MEETING

I CAN recall so well how she would look—
  How at the very murmur of her dress
On entering the door, the whole room took
  An air of gentleness.

That was so long ago, and yet his eyes
  Had always, afterwards, the look that waits
And yearns, and waits again, nor can disguise
  Something it contemplates.

May we imagine it? the sob, the tears,
  The long, sweet, shuddering breath; then, on
    her breast,
The great, full, flooding sense of endless years
  Of heaven, and her, and rest.

THE ANGEL OF PATIENCE

To weary hearts, to mourning homes
God's meekest angel gently comes;
No power has he to banish pain,
Or give us back our lost again,
And yet in tenderest love our dear
And heavenly Father sends him here.

There 's quiet in that angel's glance,
There 's rest in his still countenance!
He mocks no grief with idle cheer,
Nor wounds with words the mourner's ear:
But ills and woes he may not cure
He kindly trains us to endure.

Angel of Patience! sent to calm
Our feverish brows with cooling palm;
To lay the storms of hope and fear,
And reconcile life's smile and tear;
The throbs of wandering pride to still,
And make our own our Father's will!

O thou who mournest on the way,
With longings for the close of day;
He walks with thee, that angel kind,
And gently whispers, 'Be resigned';
Bear up, bear on, the end shall tell,
The dear Lord ordereth all things well!

John Greenleaf Whittier.

OUR ANGEL CHILD

Always lightest was her laughter,
There was dream-land in its tone,
Though she mingled with the children,
Yet she always seem'd alone.
And her prattle—'twas but child's talk,
Yet it always sparkled o'er
With a strange and shadowy wisdom,
With a bird-like, fairy lore,
Which you could not help but fancy
You had somewhere heard before,
In some old-world happy version,
By a bright Elysian shore.

All the little children loved her—
None so joyous in their play:
And yet ever there was something
Which seemed—ah! so far away,
From the joyance and the laughter,
And the streamlet's crisping foam—
'Twas as if some little song-bird
Had dropp'd down from yon blue dome,
Warbling still among the others,
Wandering with them where they roam,
And yet hallowing remembrance
With low gushes about home!

Oh, the glory of those child eyes!
Oh, the music of her feet!
Oh, those peals of spirit laughter
Coming up the village street!
Shall we never hear her knocking
At the little ivied door?
Will she never run to kiss us
Bounding o'er the oaken floor?
Has that music gone for ever?
Are those tender lispings o'er?
Oh, the terror! oh, the anguish,
Of that one word—nevermore!

Ever was she but a stranger
Among sublunary things:
All her life was but the folding
Of her gorgeous spirit-wings—
Nothing more than a forgetting—
Still she gave more than she took
From the sunlight or the starlight,
From the meadow or the brook:—
There was music in her silence,
There was wisdom in her look:
There was raying out of beauty
As from some transcendent book:
She was wonderful as grottoes
With strange gods in every nook!

And at night amid the silence,
With the little prayer-clasped hands,
She look'd holy as the Christ-Church
Rising white in Pagan lands:

Seem'd she but the faltering prelude
To a great tale of God's throne—
As a flower dropp'd out of heaven,
Telling whither it has grown.
But she left us—she our angel—
Without murmur, without moan,
And we woke and found it starlight—
Found that we were all alone,
And as desolate as birds' nests
When the fledglings all have flown!

But our house has been made sacred—
Sacred every spot she trod;
For she came a starry preacher,
Dedicating all to God.
Render thanks unto the Giver,
Though His gift be out of sight,
For a jubilant to-morrow
Shall come after this to-night.
She hath left a spirit glory
Blending with the grosser light:
Oh, the earth to us is holy!
Oh, the other world is bright!

John Stanyan Bigg.

'FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM'

Just opened blue eyes, and looked on the world,
then made no further stay:
When you put your darling in my arms I hadn't a
word to say,
And through my tears came the blinding thought,
'God's way is a terrible way;
I couldn't have dealt to my foe the stroke He has
dealt to His own to-day.'

Such a tiny, precious thing, just made for a mother's
love to enfold,
The little feet too feeble yet to tread the streets of
gold;
The howling winds were wild without, and dank
rains drenched the mould—
It was hard to lay the helpless babe out in the
storm and cold.

I know in love our Master took your darling little lad;
Some say, 'The baby-head is crowned and the baby-
heart is glad;
He might have lived a godless life—now wherefore
go so sad?
It was in mercy that our Lord took from you all
you had.'

Does God snatch souls away from life lest they
stumble in the race?
Nay, verily, His chosen ones only behold His face;

Living or dying, in God's heaven your babe had
found a place,
Purer than earth his new-born soul went straight to
Christ's embrace.

I think he'll learn to know you there, in child
accents lisp your name:
Do heaven's great harmonies of love shut out a
parent's claim?
The passionate heart of motherhood woke in you
when he came,
And, one day, dear love answering yours will satisfy
the flame.

Ah, friend! we sinful, struggling souls need a close
human tie,
Need heart of heart, and life of life, to draw us to
the sky;
When the hands of earth grow slack, the soul goes
out in a great cry
That is only stilled in the echo of the new song
sung on high.

We hear the breaking billows as all doubting here
we stand;
We cannot see the glory and green verdure of that
strand;
But we put fair flowers of hawthorn in the tiny
waxen hand,
And say, 'Our darling wakens in a better, brighter
land.'

Eliza W. Nicoll.

'WHEN THE NIGHT AND MORNING MEET'

In the dark and narrow street,
Into a world of woe,
Where the tread of many feet
Went trampling to and fro,
A child was born (speak low)
When the night and morning meet.

Full seventy summers back,
Was this—so long ago,
The feet that wore the track
Are lying straight and low,
Yet there hath been no lack
Of passers to and fro.

Within the narrow street
This Childhood ever played;
Beyond this narrow street
This Manhood never strayed;
This Age sat still and prayed,
Anear the trampling feet.

The tread of ceaseless feet
Flowed through his life, unstirred
By water's fall, or fleet
Wind music, or the bird
Of morn; these sounds are sweet,
But they were still unheard.

Within the narrow street
I stood beside a bed,
I held a dying head,
When the night and morning meet,
And every word was sweet,
Though few the words we said.

And as we spoke, dawn drew
To day—the world was fair
In fields afar I knew,
Yet spoke not to him there
Of how the grasses grew,
Besprent with dew-drops rare.

We spoke not of the sun,
Nor of this green earth fair;
This Soul, whose day was done,
Had never claimed its share
In these, and yet its rare,
Rich heritage had won.

From the dark and narrow street
Into a world of love,
A child was born, speak low,
Speak reverent; for we know
Not how they meet above,
When the night and morning meet.

Dora Greenwell.

RELEASED

A LITTLE low-ceiled room. Four walls
Whose blank shut out all else of life,
And crowded close within their bound
A world of pain, and toil, and strife.

Her world. Scarce furthermore she knew
Of God's great globe that wondrously
Outrolls a glory of green earth,
And frames it with the restless sea.

Four closer walls of common pine,
And therein lieth, cold and still,
The weary flesh that long hath borne
Its patient mystery of ill.

Regardless now of work to do;
No queen more careless in her state;
Hands crossed in their unbroken calm;
For other hands the work must wait.

Put by her implements of toil,
Put by each coarse, intrusive sign;
She made a Sabbath when she died
And round her breathes a Rest Divine.

Put by at last beneath the lid
The exempted hands, the tranquil face;
Uplift her in her dreamless sleep,
And bear her gently from the place.

Oft she hath gazed with wistful eyes
Out from that threshold from the night;
The narrow bourne she crosseth now,
She standeth in the Eternal Light.

Oft she has pressed with aching feet
Those broken steps that reach the door;
Henceforth with angels she shall tread
Heaven's golden stair for evermore.

A. D. T. Whitney.

'AS IN A GLASS DARKLY'

Ah well, shall I wonder you left me!
That World is a rest:
For so it is written. But this one,
A battle at best.
Where the victors have scant time for wearing
The green laurel crown,
And the vanquish'd go down like the dry leaves
When woodlands are brown.

You were young. You were gentle. You waited
With sorrowful eyes,
As vanished in fleeting succession
Rich prize after prize.
Till at last your small hands were left empty,
And, tired of the strife,
You turn'd to the Master. He led you
Away into life.

It is long since I saw you. I weary
And thirst every day.
Every day!—every hour I ponder,
All wistful, the way
That leads to the kingdom you dwell in;
You trod it full fast,
But I caught—was it only a fancy?—
One sigh as you pass'd.

Shall I meet you some day with the angels,
Your beauty all new?
Will your soft eyes look on me so fondly,
As they used to do,
When you gather'd my head to your bosom
With tender caress,
And my lips with a sweet touch of welcome
You bent down to press?

I hope for such meeting—I lost you
So much left untold!
But perhaps even now you know all things,
The new and the old;
Perhaps even now you are nearer
Than ever before,
And you smile as you watch me come to you,
A Lost Love no more!

Alfred Norris.

VESTA

O Christ of God! whose life and death
Our own have reconciled,
Most quietly, most tenderly
Take home Thy star-named child!

Thy grace is in her patient eyes,
Thy words are on her tongue:
The very silence round her seems
As if the angels sung.

Her smile is as a listening child's
Who hears its mother call;
The lilies of Thy perfect peace,
About her pillow fall.

She leans from out her clinging arms,
To rest herself in Thine;
Alone to Thee, dear Lord, can we
Our well-beloved resign!

Oh, less for her than for ourselves,
We bow our heads and pray;
Her setting star, like Bethlehem's,
To Thee shall point the way!

John Greenleaf Whittier.

THE E'EN BRINGS A' HAME

Upon the hills the winds are sharp and cold,
The sweet young grasses wither on the wold,
And we, O Lord, have wandered from Thy fold,
But evening brings us home.

Among the mists we stumbled and the rocks,
Where the brown lichen whitens, and the fox
Watches the straggler from the scattered flocks,
But evening brings us home.

The sharp thorns prick us, and our tender feet
Are cut and bleeding, and the lambs repeat
Their pitiful complaints—oh ! rest is sweet,
When evening brings us home.

We have been wounded by the hunter's darts,
Our eyes are very heavy, and our hearts
Search for Thy coming, when the light departs,
At evening bring us home.

The darkness gathers, thro' the gloom no star
Rises to guide. We have wandered far,
Without Thy lamp we know not where we are,
At evening bring us home.

The clouds are round us and the snowdrifts thicken,
Oh Thou dear Shepherd, leave us not to sicken
In the waste night, our tardy footsteps quicken;
At evening bring us home.

John Skelton.

BEREAVEMENT

When some Beloveds, 'neath whose eyelids lay
The sweet lights of my childhood, one by one
Did leave me dark, before the natural sun,
And I astonied fell and could not pray,—
A thought within me to myself did say,
'Is God less God that *thou* art left undone?
Rise, worship, bless Him, in this sackcloth spun,
As in that purple.'—But I answered, Nay!
What child his filial heart in words can loose,
If he beheld his tender father raise
The hand that chastens sorely? can he choose
But sob in silence with an upward gaze—
And *my* great Father, thinking fit to bruise,
Discerns in speechless tears both prayer and praise.

E. B. Browning.

CONSOLATION

All are not taken; there are left behind
Living Beloveds, tender looks to bring
And make the daylight still a happy thing,
And tender voices, to make soft the wind.
But if it were not so—if I could find
No love in all the world for comforting,
Nor any path that hollowly did ring,
Where 'dust to dust' the love from life disjoined,
And if, before those sepulchres unmoving
I stood alone (as some forsaken lamb
Goes bleating up the moors in weary dearth
Crying, 'Where are you, O my loved and loving,'
I know a voice would sound, 'Daughter, I Am:
Can I suffice for Heaven and not for earth?'

E. B. Browning.

IN TIME OF TROUBLE

Rejoice when thou dost see
God take thy things from thee;
Ay—the greater the loss,
And the heavier the cross,
The greater the gain shall be.
When thy props are laid low,
And friend turns to foe,
'Tis but because now
God seeth that thou
No longer on crutches must go—
Each here
Whom He setteth alone,
He Himself is most near.

Björnstjerne Björnson.[1]

[1] From *Fells and Fiords of Norway.*

THE SLEEP

'HE GIVETH HIS BELOVED SLEEP'

Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward into souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is,
For gift or grace surpassing this—
'He giveth His belovëd, sleep'?

What would we give to our beloved?
The hero's heart to be unmoved,
The poet's star-tuned harp to sweep,
The patriot's voice to teach and rouse,
The monarch's crown to light the brows?—
'He giveth His belovëd, sleep.'

What do we give to our beloved?
A little faith all undisproved,
A little dust to overweep,
And bitter memories to make
The whole world blasted for our sake:
'He giveth His belovëd, sleep.'

Sleep soft, beloved! we sometimes say,
Who have no tune to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep;
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber when
'He giveth His belovëd, sleep.'

O earth, so full of dreary noises!
O men with wailing in your voices!

O delvèd gold the wailers heap!
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall!
God strikes a silence through you all,
'And giveth His belovëd, sleep.'

His dews drop mutely on the hill,
His cloud above it saileth still,
Though on its slope men sow and reap:
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,
'He giveth His belovëd, sleep.'

Ay, men may wonder when they scan
A living, thinking, feeling man,
Confirmed in such a rest to keep;
But angels say, and through the word
I think their happy smile is heard—
'He giveth His belovëd, sleep.'

For me, my heart, that erst did go
Most like a tired child at a show,
That sees through tears the mummers leap,
Would now its wearied vision close,
Would, childlike, on His love repose,
'Who giveth His belovëd, sleep.'

And friends, dear friends, when it shall be
That this low breath is gone from me,
And round my bier ye come to weep,
Let one, most loving of you all,
Say, not a tear must o'er her fall,
'He giveth His belovëd, sleep.'

E. B. Browning.

A DIRGE

Low you lie, my dear,
In the grave;
Tall grass over you
Mixed with violet blue,
Primrose, daisy, too:
Low you lie.

Sound you sleep, my dear,
In the grave.
Clouds their thunder throw,
Loud winds hoarsely blow,
Drifts the sleet and snow.
Sound you sleep.

Long you stay, my dear,
In the grave;
Sunshine falls about,
Birds from nests peep out,
Children sing and shout.
Long you stay.

You will rise, my dear,
From the grave.
All your being stirred
By a spoken word,
Oh, so gladly heard!
You will rise.

Alfred Norris.

OVER THE HILLSIDE

Farewell! In dimmer distance
I watch your figures glide,
Across the sunny moorland
And brown hillside.

Each momently uprising,
Large, dark, against the sky;
Then, in the vacant moorland,
Alone sit I.

Along the unknown country
Where your lost footsteps pass,
What beauty decks the heavens
And clothes the grass!

Over the mountain shoulder
What glories may unfold!
Though I see but the mountain,
Blank, bare, and cold;

And the white road, slow winding
To where, each after each,
You slipped away—oh, whither?
I cannot reach.

And if I call, what answers?
Only 'twixt earth and sky,
Like wail of parting spirit,
The curlews cry.

Yet sunny is the moorland,
And soft the pleasant air,
And little flowers, like blessings,
Grow everywhere.

While, over all, the mountain
Stands, sombre, calm, and still,
Immutable and steadfast
As the One Will;

Which, done on earth, in heaven,
Eternally confessed
By men, and saints, and angels,
Be ever blest!

Under Its infinite shadow,
Safer than light of ours,
I 'll sit me down a little
And gather flowers.

Then I will rise and follow,
Without one wish to stay,
The path ye all have taken—
The appointed way.

Dinah M. Craik.

RESIGNATION

To a quaint old-fashion'd homestead,
With its ivied towers,
Came a Lady in the spring-time,
Came, when April's sudden showers,
Glancing through the fitful sunshine,
Ran down rainbows into flowers;
And she said, 'I would not murmur;
God's will must be done;
So I 've brought my two twin daughters,
And come here to feel the sun!'

Living in that quiet hamlet
Through three chequer'd years,
She was known in every cottage;
And the poor tell, in their tears,
How her presence made them happy,
And her words dispell'd their fears.

When she said, 'O do not murmur!
God's will must be done;
Take my alms, and ask His blessing,
And go out and feel the sun!'

Once a widow met her walking
Near the churchyard stile,
With a brow as free from sadness
As her soul was free from guile.
And she whisper'd as she join'd her,
'Lady, teach me how to smile.'
And she answer'd, 'Honest neighbour,
God's will must be done;
And whene'er thy heart is drooping,
Then come out and feel the sun!

'For, I tell thee, I have troubles;
More than one,' she saith:
'Have I seen the face of anguish,
Heard its quick and catching breath?
Yea, three pictures in my parlour
Are now sanctified by death.
Yet,' she saith, 'I do not murmur;
God's will must be done:
But I take my two twin daughters,
And go out and feel the sun!'

In the rain two graves are greening,
Greening day by day,
And young children, when they near them
Playing, cease to play,
Lose their smiles and merry glances,
And in silence steal away.
Yet she says, 'I will not murmur;
God's will must be done:
But I love the streaming starlight
Better than the alter'd sun.'

Never weeps she, now they 've left her,
Weeps not in her grief,
But she talks of shining angels,
With a wild uncheck'd belief;
When all earthly hopes have fail'd us,
Hopes of Heav'n still give relief.
And she says, 'I will not murmur;
God's will has been done;
And, though *I* am left in darkness,
They are somewhere in the sun!'

James Pritchett Bigg.

BY THE DEAD

You are gone away, away!
Here the tabernacling clay:
But the shutters now are fast,
And the door has swung its last;
The cold body lies quite still
As a snowdrift on the hill.

Are you really gone away?
You were with me night and day.
Are you gone? I kiss your eyes,
But they flutter not to rise;
Long I whisper in your ear—
You would speak if you were here.

You are gone, dear spirit, where?
Are you near me in the air—
All invisible to me?
Yet my weeping do you see,
And lean downward close and low,
Watching wistful where I go?

Do you feel the heat of the sun,
Chill of night when day is done,
Clammy touch of drifting snow?
Hear the wild winds when they blow,
Fluttering leaves and falling rain,
Rivers running through the plain?

Do you see the purple heath
On the cliffs, and underneath
Azure seas and yellow sands,
Poppied cornfields on the lands?
Or is earth, its sight and sound,
So much loose mist coiling round?

When at night upon my bed
Seeking sleep, I find instead
Some strange coldness on the brow,
Feel it coming—going now—
Is your presence in this place,
And your breath upon my face?

When by day I take my stand,
Working steady, head and hand,
Comes a warm thrill to my soul,
Spreading swiftly through the whole—
Are you there with touch intense,
Flashing through the bars of sense!

This I know not, but I know
You are gone from all below;
You will suffer no more pain,
Never weep nor grieve again—
I am glad that this is known,
Though I stay here all alone.

You are with the Saviour, dear,
And He tells you not to fear,
Though surpassing glories blind
Mortal eye and mortal mind;
And He shows you what to do
In the land with all things new.

I must try to follow on
To the heaven that you have won:
I remember what you said,
And the path you bid me tread—
Though I cannot see you near,
I shall think you see me here.

You are gone, away, away!
Pass the night and pass the day;
Oh, to meet in that sweet place,
Hand in hand, and face to face—
With the resting there to rest,
With the blessed to be blest!

Alfred Norris.

LITTLE CHRISTEL

Come in softly! This is the room;
Is not that an innocent face?
Yes, those flowers give a faint perfume:
Think, child, of heaven, and the Lord His grace.

Three at the right, and three at the left,
Two at the feet, and two at the head,
The tapers burn. The friends bereft
Have cried till their eyes are swollen and red.

Who would have thought it when little Christel
Pondered on what the preacher had told?
But the good, wise God does all things well,
And the fair young creature lies dead and cold.

William Brighty Rands
(*Matthew Browne*).

A FAREWELL SONG

Greetna, father, that I 'm gaein',
For fu' weel ye ken the gaet.
I' the winter, corn ye 're sawin';
I' the hairst, again ye hae't.

I 'm gaein' hame to see my mither,
She 'll be weel acquant or this;
Sair we 'll muse at ane anither,
'Tween the auld word an' new kiss.

Love, I 'm doubtin', will be scanty
Roun' ye baeth when I 'm awa';
But the kirk has happin' plenty,
Close aside me, for you twa;

An', aboon, there 's room for mony—
'Twasna made for ane or twa;
But it grew for a' an' ony
Countin' love the best ava'.

Here, aneath, I ca' ye father:
Auld names we 'll nor tyne nor spare;
A' my sonship I maun gather,
For the Son is King up there.

Greetna, father, that I 'm gaein'
For ye ken fu' weel the gaet;
Here, in winter, cast yer sawin'—
There, in hairst, again ye hae 't.

George Mac Donald.

THE GIRL THAT LOST THINGS

It was a girl that lost things,
Nor only from her hand;
She lost, indeed—why, most things,
As if they had been sand!

She said, 'But I must use them!
I cannot hoard them all!
Indeed, I did not lose them,
I only let them fall!'

And first she lost her thimble—
It fell upon the floor;
Her eyes were very nimble,
But she never saw it more.

And then she lost her dolly—
Her very doll of all!
And that was far from jolly.
But worse things did befall.

She lost a ring of pearls,
With a ruby in them set;
But the dearest girl of girls
Cried only, did not fret.

She lost her way, far wandering,
But no ill did betide;
Brook-like, she, but meandering,
Came home on t'other side.

And once she lost a kiss,
It was upon the stair;
But that she did not miss,
For sure it was somewhere!

Just there she lost her heart, too;
But did so well without it,
She took that in good part, too,
And said not much about it.

But when she lost her health,
She did feel rather poor;
Then in came loads of wealth
By quite another door!

And then she lost a dimple
That was upon her cheek;
But that was very simple—
She was so thin and weak.

And then she lost her mother,
And thought that she was dead!
And there was not another
On whom to lay her head!

And then she lost herself—
But that she threw away;
And God upon His shelf
It carefully did lay.

At last she lost the world—
But that she did not mind!
Away from it she whirled
In a black and stormy wind—

Away to the land of lost things,
The land of lovely saving;
And there she found—why, most things,
And all things worth the having.

For first she found her mother,
And for very joy she cried;
And then she found that other
Who kept her heart inside.

And then she found the kiss
She lost upon the stair;
She had it back, I guess,
But to keep it did not care.

And she found herself all mended,
New-fitted clean and white;
And she found her health new-blended
With a radiant delight.

So, if you cannot keep things,
Be quiet till to-morrow;
And mind you don't beweep things
That are not worth your sorrow.

For the Father great of fathers,
And of all the girls and boys,
Us in His arms all gathers,
And cares about our toys.

George Mac Donald.

IN THE CHURCHYARD

Oh, ye dead! oh, ye dead! ye are lying at your rest;
I am lying thus above you, and I know not which is best:
Just between us are the grasses, and the gravel, and the clay,
But they measure not the distance into which you pass away.

Reaching downward grow the rootlets of the flowers and the heath,
But they cannot touch the bodies that are lying underneath;
For the eye and ear have wasted, and the busy heart decayed,
Dust to dust your all resolving, as from dust your all was made.

I look upon the sunshine, and the sea-waves as they roll,
And the clouds in high mid-heaven—are such sights before your soul?
I hear the breeze and streamlet, and the curlew, and the sheep
Bleating far upon the mountain—do they wake you out of sleep?

Do you know the change of seasons, as of old they
come and go—
Now the flowers, now the fruitage, now the fading,
now the snow?
Do you feel a sudden trembling when the loved
ones tread above,
And the echo of their footsteps is the echo of their
love?

Do you find a thrill of sorrow as the husband, or
the wife,
Dry their tears for the departed, and begin to search
their life—
Till another takes his station in the fields you used
to tread,
And another takes your pillow and upon it lays her
head?

Do such earthly matters move you? You are passed
from hence away
Into larger joys and sorrows than belong to this our day;
And you look upon the whirling of this life with
calmer eyes
That have learned to bear the measure of eternity's
surprise.

Are you near us? Can you see us? Can you watch
us in our ways?
Do you witness all the evil—all the good of all our
days?
Do you, knowing all things better, wonder at us in
our strife,
As we clutch the tinsel gilding, and pass by the
Crown of Life?

Oh, ye dead! oh, ye dead! young and old, and small and great,
Now you know your doom of sorrow, or your high and blest estate;
And I wonder, as I ponder, what you feel and what you see,
As according to the sowing so the reaping now must be.

It is strange to sit so thinking; it is stranger still to know
We must soon lie down and join you in the land to which ye go;
We must soon put off this body with its tabernacling clay,
And salute the world of spirits, as a spirit passed away.

Oh, ye dead! oh, ye dead! small and great, and young and old,
I am longing for your secret, and my longing makes me bold.
But, since the day they brought you from your houses on the hill,
You have kept that secret steadfast, and I know will keep it still.

Alfred Norris.

NOT LOST, BUT GONE BEFORE

One of God's own darlings was my bosom's nestling dove,
With her looks of love and sunshine, and her voice so rich and low;
How it trembled through my life, like an Immortal's kiss of love!
How its music yearns through all my memory now!

Oh! her beauty rainbows round me, and her sweet smile, silvery
As a song, fills all the silence of the midnight's charmèd hours;
And I know from out her grave she'll send her love in death to me,
By the Spring in smiling utterance of flowers.

Oh! my Love, too good for earth, has gone into the world of light!
It was hard, she said, to leave me, but the Lord had need of her!
And she walks the heavens in glory, like a star in the crown of night,
With the beautiful and blessèd mingling there.

Gone before me, to be clothèd on with bridal robe of white,
Where Love's blossom flowers to fruit of knowledge—suffering's glorified!
And my love shall make me meet and worthy of her presence bright,
That in heaven I may claim her as my Bride.

Gerald Massey.

THE FLOWER FADETH

Softly
She is lying
With her lips apart,
Whisper
She is dying
Of a broken heart.

Nearer
Though she 's setting
Her far look above,
Dearer
Though forgetting
All our little love.

Ponder
What a story
These poor lips could tell!
Wonder
What a glory
Hers in that frail shell!

Praying
Would 'twere over,
As we catch her sigh,
Praying
Let us love her
More before she die.

Hush!
Now she's as distant
As a thousand years;
Weep,
For Death has left us
Nought but these cold tears.

Roses, you may blossom,
Lilies, you may blow,
But on yon cold bosom
All my flowers lie low.

William Knox Macadam.

HOME VISIONS

I HAVE gone—I cannot always go, you know ;
Best 'tis so—
Home across the distant ridges of the years
With my tears,
And the old house, standing still in the old ground,
There I found.

In the parlour, in my fancy, I could trace
Father's face ;
And my mother, with her old accustomed air,
Sitting there ;
Whilst beside them, brothers, sisters, true and good,
Silent stood.

Through the stillness swarm the song of summer bird,
And there stirred
On the wall the leaf-flecked sunshine ; and its glow
Faded slow ;
But, from all the loving lips I watched around,
Not a sound.

Then I went upstairs, slow entering in their glooms
All the rooms ;
And I trod with softened step along the floors,
Opened doors ;
But I never heard a voice, or met a soul
In the whole.

Of the breaths that stirred the draperies to and fro
Long ago—
Of the eyes that through the casements used to peep
Out of sleep—
Of the feet that in these chambers used to run—
Now are none.

Of the sunshine pouring downward from the sky,
Blue and high—
Of the leafage and the ancient garden-plot,
Brown and hot—
Of the streamlet, and the shingle, and the tide—
These abide.

But beyond the azure vaulting overhead
Are my dead;
Though their graves were dug apart in many lands,
Joining hands,
Have they gather'd! Are they waiting till I come?
That is Home.

Alfred Norris.

A SONG OF REST

HERE God has given His belovèd sleep!
It is dark night within, and all the bed
Is folded smooth by Him that made it; deep,
And curtained close about the feet and head,
There is no rise or falling of the breast,
The earth lies light upon them, and the sod
Heaves not. The heart for evermore hath rest
When once its beatings have been stilled by God;
For they that talked with it have taken flight.
There are no busy voices underground,
When thought and memory have said 'Good-night!'
And passed, in fear to break a sleep so sound;
Yet they whom slumber wraps so sweetly now
Were wont erewhile a troubled watch to keep,
And slept perchance for sadness: wait, and thou
Shalt also sleep!

And here the sleep that God hath given is sweet:
So sweet, that they are covetous of rest
That slumber here, and when the parted meet
They speak not, even they that loved the best;
For they have rest from *all*, and love had grown
Too dear for quietness, so now they sleep
Until the hour when God shall give His own
Belovèd ones a rest more full and deep.

While from the ground a voice unto me cries,
'Here God hath given sleep,' an answer clear
Falls from the solemn, bright, attesting skies:
'He giveth rest and love together here!'
Sleep is not rest—yet softly on it now
The shadow of a rest beyond it lies,
And lengthens ever: wait, my soul, and thou
Shalt also rise!

Dora Greenwell.

HER PILGRIMAGE

The snow-flakes floated many a star
To earth from pale December's skies,
When a fair spirit from afar
Smiled through an infant's violet eyes.

And as she sweetly breathed, the hours
Wove, like a robe of gossamer,
All grace about her, while the flowers
Their tints and perfumes gave to her.

In after time, when violets grew,
And pale anemones veiled the land,
She drooped her modest eyes of blue,
And gave to Love her maiden hand.

Four times the holy angels came
To greet her with a dear unrest;
And, in a mother's saintly name,
Left a young angel on her breast.

Eight lustrums' pure celestial eyes
Beamed through her tender, loving gaze,
Commingling all the sweet surprise
Of heavenly with the earthly rays.

At last, her gentle face grew pale
As the anemones of spring;
And whiter than her bridal veil
Was that in which she took her wing.

And than that fixed despair more white,
Softly the stars, in feathery snows,
Came, covering with serener light
Her folded hands, her meek repose.

Pale stars, through which the night looked down,
Until they wept away in showers
On those dear hands, which clasped the crown,
And closer still the cross of flowers.

The snow-flakes melt on earth in tears;
The eternal stars in glory shine;
While in the shroud of desolate years
Dead Love awaits the immortal sign.

ARE THE CHILDREN AT HOME?

Each day when the glow of sunset
Fades in the western sky,
And the wee ones, tired of playing,
Go tripping lightly by,
I steal away from my husband,
Asleep in his easy-chair,
And watch from the open doorway
Their faces fresh and fair.

Alone in the dear old homestead
That once was full of life,
Ringing with girlish laughter,
Echoing boyish strife,
We two are waiting together;
And oft as the shadows come,
With tremulous voice he calls me:
'It is night! are the children home?'

'Yes, love!' I answer him gently,
'They 're all home long ago';—
And I sing in my quavering treble,
A song so soft and low,
Till the old man drops to slumber,
With his head upon his hand,
And I tell to myself the number
Home in the better land.

Home, where never a sorrow
Shall dim their eyes with tears:
Where the smile of God is on them
Through all the summer years!
I know!—Yet my arms are empty,
That fondly folded seven,
And the mother heart within me
Is almost starved for heaven.

Sometimes in the dusk of evening,
I only shut my eyes,
And the children are all about me,
A vision from the skies:
The babes whose dimpled fingers
Lose the way to my breast,
And the beautiful ones, the angels,
Passed to the world of the blessed.

With never a cloud upon them,
I see their radiant brows:—
My boys that I gave to freedom,—
The red sword sealed their vows!
In a tangled southern forest,
Twin brothers, bold and brave,
They fell: and the flag they died for,
Thank God! floats over their grave.

A breath, and the vision is lifted
Away on wings of light,
And again we two are together,
All alone in the night.

They tell me his mind is failing,
  But I smile at idle fears:
He is only back with the children,
  In the dear and peaceful years.

And still as the summer sunset
  Fades away in the west,
And the wee ones, tired of playing,
  Go trooping home to rest,
My husband calls from his corner,
  'Say, love! have the children come?'
And I answer, with eyes uplifted,
  'Yes, dear! they are all at home!',

M. E. M. Sangster.

THE SILENT PRAYER

She prayed: I watched her nightly
On her knees beside the bed,
And for awhile each prayer-time
I heard the words she said.

And then there fell a silence
On her bowed head, and I thought
My senses had been sleeping,
Since her words I had not caught.

But duly as the night came,
Came that silent prayer again;
I marked her lips unmoving,
And I knew the mystery then.

Was she praying for the living?
Was she praying for the dead?
There was no sobbing, sighing,
And not a tear was shed.

She was fragile in her beauty
As a leaf before the blast:
Was she praying for sweet patience
Till the storm was over-past?

Who shall tell us of her loving?
Who shall tell us of her tears?
She is gone from us for ever
In her uncompleted years.

Gone like snow from off the mountain,
  Gone like mist from out the vale;
In her golden hour of morning
  She was swept before the gale.

She never told in dying
  What had winged that silent prayer,
But sometimes we divined it,
  When we saw her look so fair;

Fair with lilies on her forehead,
  Fair as lilies, and as sweet;
Fair with slumber on her forehead,
  Fair with silence at her feet.

Ere the hand of death could reach her
  She had flown to meet his kiss;
Ere another land could claim her,
  She was far away from this.

She was far beyond our sunshine,
  She was breathing other air,
Alone with her Creator
  In the shadow of a prayer.

Eleanora L. Hervey.

REMEMBER

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned;
Only remember me: you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while,
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile,
Than that you should remember and be sad.

Christina G. Rossetti.

SOUND SLEEP

Some are laughing, some are weeping:
She is sleeping, only sleeping.
Round her rest wild flowers are creeping:
There the wind is heaping, heaping
Sweetest sweets of summer's keeping,
By the corn-fields ripe for reaping.

There are lilies, and there blushes
The deep rose, and there the thrushes
Sing till latest sunlight flushes
In the west: a fresh wind brushes
Through the leaves while evening hushes.

There by day the lark is singing,
And the grass and weeds are springing:
There by night the bat is winging:
There for ever winds are bringing
Far-off chimes of church-bells ringing.

Night and morning, noon and even,
Their sound fills her dreams with Heaven:
The long strife at length is striven:
Till her grave-bands shall be riven:
Such is the good portion given
To her soul at rest and shriven.

Christina G. Rossetti.

GRANDFATHER'S PET

This is the room where she slept
  Only a year ago,
Quiet and carefully swept,
  Blinds and curtains like snow,
There by the bed in the dusky gloom
She would kneel with her tiny clasped hands and
    pray:
This is the little white rose of a room
With the fragance fled away!

Effie, grandfather's pet,
  With her wise little face,
I seem to see, to see her yet
  Singing about the place.
But the crowds roll on, and the streets are drear,
And the world seems hard with a bitter doom,
And Effie is singing elsewhere, and here
Is the little white rose of a room.

Why, if she stood just there
  As she used to do,
With her long, light yellow hair
  And her eyes of blue,—
If she stood, I say, at the edge of the bed,
And ran to my side with a living touch,
Though I know she is quiet, and buried and dead,
I should not wonder much:

For she was so young, you know—
  Only seven years old,
And she loved me, loved me so,
  Though I was grey and old.
And her face was so wise and so sweet to see
That it still looked living when she lay dead,
And she used to plead for mother and me
By the side of that very bed.

I wonder now if she
  Knows I am standing here,
Feeling, wherever she be,
  We hold the place so dear?
It cannot be that she sleeps too sound,
Still in her little nightgown dressed,
Not to hear my footsteps sound
In the room where she used to rest.

Nay! though I am dull and blind,
  Since men are bad and base,
The Lord is much too kind
  To mar such a sweet young face.
Why, when we stood by her still bedside
She seemed to breathe like a living thing,
And when I murmured her name, and cried,
She seemed to be listening.

I have felt hard fortune's stings,
  And battled in death and strife,
And never thought much of things
  Beyond this human life:

But I cannot think that my darling died
Like great strong men, with their prayers untrue;
Nay, rather she sits at God's own side,
And sings as she used to do.

A weary path I have trod,
And now I feel no fear;
For I cannot think that God
Is so far, since she was here!
As I stand, I can see the blue eyes shine,
And the small arms reach through the curtained gloom,
While the breath of the great Lord God Divine
Stirs the little white rose of a room.

Stewart Robertson.

INTO MARY'S BOSOM

Mary, mother of all mothers,
  First in love as pain on earth,
Having known above all others
  Mysteries of death and birth :
Take, from travail sore released,
One more mother to thy breast.

She, like thee, was pure and good,
  Happy-hearted, young and sweet,
Given to prayer, of Dorcas' mood,
  Open hands and active feet ;
Naught missed from her childless life
In her full content as wife.

But God said, though no one heard,—
  Neither friend nor husband dear,—
Be it according to My word,
  Other lot awaits thee here,
One more loving soul must be
Born into this world for Me.

So as glad as autumn leaf
  Hiding the small bud of spring,
She, without one fear or grief,
  Her Magnificat did sing,
And His wondrous ways adored,
Like the handmaid of the Lord.

Nay, as neared her solemn day,
Which brought with it life or death,
Still her heart kept light and gay,
Still her eyes of earnest faith
Smiled with deeper peace possessed:
He will do what seems Him best.

And He did. He led her, brave
In her blindfold childlike trust,
To the threshold of the grave,
To His palace gate. All just
He must be, or could not here
Thus so merciless appear.

He must see with larger eyes,
He must love with deeper love:
We, half loving—scarce half wise,
Clutch at those He doth remove,
See no cause for—struggle long
With our sharp mysterious wrong.

But for her! dear saint gone up
Into Mary's bosom straight,
All the honey of her cup
Yet unspilled—not left to wait
Till her milky mother's breast
Felt the sword-thrust like the rest.

Eight sweet days she had—full stored
With her new maternal bliss
O'er her man-child from the Lord.
Then He took her. So to this
Melt her seven-and-twenty years,
Gone like night when morn appears.

Let the February sun
  Shining on the bursting buds,
And the baby life begun,
  And the bird life in the woods,
On her grave still calmly shine
With a beauty all divine.

Though we cannot trace God's ways,
  They to her may plain appear,
And her voice, that sang His praise,
  May still sing it loud and clear,
O'er this silence of death sleep
Wondering at those who weep.

Thus, our Father, one by one
  Into Thy bright home we go,
With our work undone or done,
  With our footsteps swift or slow,
Dark the door that doth divide,
But, O God, the other side!

Dinah M. Craik.

A SONG OF HOPE

I DINNA ken what 's come ower me!
  There 's a how whaur ance was a hert!
I never luik oot afore me,
  An' a cry winna gar me stert;
There 's naething nae mair to come ower me,
  Blaw the win' frae ony airt!

For i' yon kirkyaird there 's a hillock,
  A hert whaur ance was a how;
An' o' joy there 's no left a mealock—
  Deid aiss whaur ance was a low!
For i' yon kirkyaird i' the hillock,
  Lies a seed 'at winna grow.

It 's my hert 'at hauds up the wee hillie—
  That 's hoo there 's a how i' my breist;
It 's awa' doon there wi' my Willie,
  Gaed wi' him whan he was releast;
It 's doon i' the green-grown hillie,
  But I s' be efter it neist!

Come awa', nichts an' mornin's,
  Come ooks, years, a' time's clan;
Ye 're walcome ayont ony scornin';
  Tak' me til him as fest as ye can.
Come awa', nichts an' mornin's,
  Ye are wings o' a michty span!

For I ken he 's luikin' an' waitin',
Luikin' aye doon as I clim';
Wad I hae him see me sit greitin',
I'stead o' gaein' to him?
I 'll step oot like ane sure o' a meetin',
I 'll traivel an' rin to him.

George Mac Donald.

AT NAIN

Forth from the city portals went
  Our slow and mournful train,
With him for whom we made lament,
  Unmindful of our pain,
And heedless of her deadlier grief
  Whose numb and pulseless woe
Found not a sob to give relief,
  Nor any tears to flow—
Above her grave he should have wept,
To his her tottering footsteps crept.

When last she trod that haunted road,
  Her griefs on him were stayed;
Ah, bitter then the tears that flowed,
  And precious then the dead.
Perchance that day she little cared
  For aught of solace left:
Yet now with feebler steps she fared,
  More desolate, worse bereft,
Amid our kindly folk alone,
Voiceless, impassive, turned to stone.

Who might recall her, e'en to pain?
  Or give her sorrow tears?
Or nerve her trancèd soul again
  To dare the desolate years?

One looks the mourner in the face,
And lo, she lifts her eyes,
And all her numb despair gives place,
Hot tears and sobs arise;
We blessed Him for the grace which broke
Her palsied silence ere He spoke.

Like stars that brood above our night,
His eyes with tears were filled;
Yet all men felt their mystic might,
They soothed and warmed and thrilled.
And when He bade her not to weep,
Our hearts grew faint with awe,
So strong the tones, and clear and deep,
We surely deemed He saw
Some wondrous vision of the dead
That proved our tears unwisely shed.

He laid His hand upon the bier,
The bearers' steps were stayed;
He called, and lo, the dead gave ear
Gave ear, and raised his head,
And spake, as from the spirit-land,
Some words we might not gain
Whose paths are in the desert sand,
Who eat the bread of pain—
Not ours to know the way he trod,
Whose spirit had gone in to God.

Ah, what might such a wanderer learn?
Must Lethe steep his brain,
Before his spirit may return
To our dim world again?

And doth he never, chafed and vexed,
For life grown dull and grey,
By questions and by cares perplexed,
Yearn for the bygone day
When, closing wearied eyes, he thought,
'Life's latest task is well-nigh wrought!'

How calm should be his joys, and deep
His loves august and pure,
Whom Jesus wakens from the sleep
When once his rest was sure.
But we, our feet are bruised and torn
Much weeping dims our eyes,
At evening we desire the morn,
The darkness at sunrise;
Sleeping, love shall not call us back,
Nor lengthen out our journey's track.

* * * *

The wistful mother claimed him not:
His new mysterious life
She deemed some lone and lofty lot,
Some wild and desolate strife,
Or pilgrimage on paths apart
From common joys and fears,
From yearnings of a woman's heart
And meltings of her tears.
Nor deemed that One had waked the dead
For tears her widowed eyes had shed.

The Master watched our deepening dread,
  Who would have given Him then
A golden crown to grace His head,
  A guard of mailèd men;
Yet turned to her whose face was pale
  With yearnings and with joy,
And knew the spell of most avail,
  And gave her back her boy.
She clasped her darling to her breast;
Christ's quiet footsteps forward pressed.

George A. Chadwick.

OURS

He had only baby words,
Little music, like the birds,
Sweetly inarticulate,
Nothing wise, nor high, nor great.
Sunny smiles and kisses sweet—
White and softly childish feet—
Curls that floated on the breeze—
We remember him for these.

They are weary who are wise.
He looked up with happy eyes,
Little knowing, little seeing,
Only praising God by being.

Oh, the life we could not save!
Do not say, above his grave,
That the fair and darling face
Was but lent a little space
Till the Father called him back,
By an unknown homeward track.
No, though Death came darkly chill—
Bade the beating heart be still,
Touching him with fingers cold—
What was given still we hold;
Though he died, as die the flowers,
He for evermore is ours.

Ours, though we must travel soon
Onward through Life's afternoon;
Shadows, falling long and grey,
Gather round the western day,
And our twilight visions show
How the years shall come and go.

Little maids, with tangled curls,
Change to slender, dreamy girls;
Chubby rogues grow tall, and then,
Go their way as bearded men.
And the mother stands aside,
With an ache beneath her pride,
And a sorrow 'mid her joys,
For the vanished babes and boys;
So the earlier gladness wanes—
But the little one remains.

M. Veley.

TOKENS

Of all the flowers rising now,
Thou only saw'st the head
Of that unopened drop of snow
I placed beside thy bed.

In all the blooms that blow so fast
Thou hast no further part,
Save those, the hour I saw thee last,
I laid above thy heart.

Two snowdrops for our boy and girl,
A primrose blown for me,
Wreathed with one often-played-with curl
From each bright head for thee.

And so I graced thee for thy grave,
And made these tokens fast
With that old silver heart I gave,
My first gift—and my last.

W. B. Philpot.

SAFE

Safe? the battlefield of life
Seldom knows a pause in strife.
Every path is set with snares,
Every joy is crossed by cares.
Brightest morn has darkest night,
Fairest bloom has quickest blight.
Hope has but a transient gleam,
Love is but a passing dream,
Trust is Folly's helpless waif.
Who dare call their dearest safe?

But thou, though peril loom afar,
What hast thou to do with war?
Let the wild stream flood its brink,
There's no bark of thine to sink.
Let Falsehood weave its subtle net,
Thou art done with vain regret.
Let Fortune frown, and friends grow strange,
Thou hast passed the doom of change.
We plan and struggle, mourn and chafe—
Safe, my Darling, dead, and safe!

S. K. P.

GOOD-NIGHT

Destroyer! what do you here—here by my poor
little nest?
What have I done that your shadow lies on my
brightest and best?
If 'twas my sin that smirched the cross on the door,
O Death,
Blood of mine should efface it, and not this Innocent's
passing breath.

O cruel to drench the fleece of my one little lamb
with thy dew!
O sightless to quench the light in eyes so guileless
and true!
O heartless and brainless to still the life in this hand
that glows,
And the love and the thought that breed in these
wide, grey-fading brows!

The sweet, unfaltering voice!—'Papa, do you think
I shall die?'
'Die, my dear? All 's in God's hands, but I think
—so think not I,
You will live to be a big man; and when I am old
and grey,
You shall take me by the arm and guide me along
the way.

But if it should be death, do you know what it is, little one?—
It is only a falling asleep, and you wake and the darkness is gone.
And mamma and papa will sleep too; and when that the day is come,
We shall meet all together in heaven—in heaven instead of at home.

Don't you know that, asleep in your bed, an hour like a moment seems?
Be not afraid of that!—it is past in a night without dreams.
We are only apart, dear child, 'twixt the evening and morning light!'
'Good-night, then, papa, and God bless you!'
'My darling, my darling, good-night!'

Frederick Greenwood.

THAT NEVER WAS ON SEA OR LAND

I DREAMED that same old dream again last night;
You know I told you of it once, and more:
The sun had risen, and looked upon the sea,
And turned his head and looked upon the shore,
As if he never saw the world before.

What mystic, mythic season could it be?
It was October with the heart of May.
How count they time within love's calendar?
Dreaming or waking, I can only say
It was the morning of our wedding-day.

I only know I heard your happy step,
As I sat working on my wedding-day
Within my usual place, my usual task;
You came and took the pen, and laughing, 'Nay!'
You said, 'no more this morning! Come away!'

And I, who had been doing dreamily
Within my dream some fitful thing before
(My pen and I were both too tired to stop),
Drew breath—dropped all my work upon the floor,
And let you lead me mutely to the door,

And out into a place I never saw,
Where little waves came shyly up and curled
Themselves about our feet; and far beyond
As eye could see, a mighty ocean swirled.
'We go,' you said, 'alone into the world.'

But yet we did not go, but sat and talked
Of usual things, and in our usual way ;
And now and then I stopped myself to think,—
So hard it is for work-worn souls to play,—
Why, after all it is our wedding-day !

The fisher-folk came passing up and down,
Hither and thither, and the ships sailed by,
And busy women nodded cheerily ;
And one from out a little cottage came,
With quiet porches, where the vines hung high,

And wished us joy, and 'When you 're tired,' she
said,
'I bid you welcome ; come and rest with me.'
But she was busy like the rest, and left
Us only out of all the world to be
Idle and happy by the idle sea.

And there were colours cast upon the sea
Whose names I know not, and upon the land
The shapes of shadows that I never saw ;
And faintly far I felt a strange moon stand,—
Yet still we sat there, hand in clinging hand,

And talked, and talked, and talked, as if it were
Our last long chance to speak, or you to me
Or I to you, for this world or the next ;
And still the fisherwomen busily
Passed by, and still the ships sailed to the sea.

But by-and-by the sea, the earth, the sky
Took on a sudden colour that I knew,
And a wild wind arose and beat at them.
The fisherwomen turned a deadly hue,
And I, in terror, turned me unto you,

And wrung my wretched hands, and hid my face.
'Oh, now I know the reason, Love,' I said,
'We 've talked, and talked, and talked the livelong
day,
Like strangers, on the day that we were wed;
For I remember now that you were dead!'

I woke afraid: around the half-lit room
The broken darkness seemed to stir and creep;
I thought a spirit passed before my eyes;
The night had grown a thing too dread for sleep,
And human life a lot too sad to weep.

Beneath the moon, across the silent lawn,
The garden paths gleamed white—a mighty cross
Cut through the shadowed flowers solemnly;
Like heavenly love escaped from earthly dross,
Or heavenly peace born out of earthly loss.

And wild my uncalmed heart went questioning it;
'Can that which never has been, ever be?'
The solemn symbol told me not, but lay
As dumb before me as Eternity,
As dumb as *you* are, when you look at me.

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

THE NEW NAME

What new name hae they gi'en thee, love,
In the far-near countree,
That nane can ken but them wha get?
Oh *whisper* it to me!

I 'm wae to lose thy auld sweet name
I lo'ed sae weel to hear
In the quiet o' the gloamin' hour,
When nane kent I was near.

Thy gloamin's noo are a' gane by,
An' wi' them meikle pain;
And my last gloamin' 's fa'in' doon,
But I am a' alane.

* * * *

In the near-far o' our young life
Thy name was changed to mine.
Oh, when I reach thy far-near hame,
May my new name be thine!

D. Gilmour.

JUST DEAD

Draw the curtains close,
  Whisper a brief, brief prayer
For him so pale and dumb in his woes;
Lay on her breast a white, white rose,
  And leave our darling there;
With the peachy bloom that lay on her cheek
Faded away to a single streak,
And a chill on her bosom that throbs no more
With the beautiful life that hath gone before.

O breathing white rose,
  O breathless white form,
The morning comes and the evening goes
  With change of calm and storm;
But ye sweet flowers shall fade together,
Where darkness and silence make peacefuller weather
Than wait on the hearts that say in their pain,
The flower that was fairest shall bloom again.

ALL SAINTS' DAY

(AT NEW COLLEGE CHAPEL, OXFORD)

I SHALL find them again, I shall find them again,
Though I cannot tell when or where;
My earthly own, gone to worlds unknown,
But never beyond Thy care.

I shall find them again, I shall find them again,
By the soul that within me dwells,
And leaps unto Thee with rapture free,
As the jubilant anthem swells.

'*I heard a voice saying.*' What it says
I hear. So perchance do they,
As I stand between my living, I ween,
And my dead, upon All Saints' Day.

And I see all clear—new heavens, new earth,
New bodies, redeemed from pain:
New souls—ah! not so: with the soul that I know
Let me find, let me find them again!

Let me walk with them under any sky,
Beside any land or sea,
In what shape or make Thou will'st us to take,
If like unto, near to, Thee.

Let me wander wherever Thou bidd'st me go,
Rest, labour, or even remain,
Lulled in long still sleep in the earth or the deep,
If I wake to find them again.

Only at times does the awful mist
Lift off, and we seem to see
For a moment's space the far dwelling-place
Of these, our beloved, and Thee.

Only at times through our soul's shut doors
Come visits divine as brief,
And we cease to grieve, crying, 'Lord, I believe,
Help Thou mine unbelief.'

Linger a little, invisible host
Of the sainted dead who stand
Perhaps not far off, though men may scoff—
Touch me with unfelt hand.

But my own, my own, ye are holding me fast,
With the human clasp that I knew;
Through the chorus clear your voices I hear,
And I am singing with you.

Ah, they melt away as the music dies,
Back comes the world's work,—hard, plain:
Yet God lifted in grace the veil from His face,
And it smiled, 'Thou shalt find them again.'

Dinah M. Craik.

THE VISION OF THE SNOW

'She has gone to be with the angels,'
So they had always said
To the little questioner asking
Of his fair young mother, dead.

They never had told of the darkness
Of the sorrowful, silent tomb,
Nor scared the sensitive spirit
By linking a thought of gloom

With the girl-like beautiful being,
Who patiently from her breast
Had laid him in baby sweetness,
To pass to her early rest.

And when he would lisp, 'Where is she?'
Missing the mother-kiss,
They answered, 'Away in a country
That is lovelier far than this;

A land all ashine with beauty,
Too pure for our mortal sight,
Where the darling ones who have left us
Are walking in robes of white.'

And with eagerest face he would listen,
His tremulous lips apart,
Till the thought of the Beautiful Country
Haunted his yearning heart.

One morn, as he gazed from the window,
A miracle of surprise,
A marvellous, mystic vision,
Dazzled his wondering eyes.

Born where the winter's harshness
Is tempered with spring-tide glow,
The delicate Southern nursling
Never had seen the snow.

And clasping his childish fingers,
He turned with a flashing brow
And cried, '*We have got to heaven;*
Show me my mother now!'

THE HYMN OF THE DEAD

O ! SOMEBODY dead in de graveyard
An' somebody dead in de sea,
Gwine ter wake up an' shout in de mornin',
An' sing dat Jubilee.
Roll, Jordan, roll !
Sister, you oughter been dar
Ter hear dat water roll ;
You oughter been shout in de kingdom
Ter hear dat river roll.

O ! father kilt wid a bullet,
An' father cyarved wid a knife ;
Yo' woun' 'll be heal' some mornin',
When you get ter de Lan' er Life.
Roll, Jordan, roll !
There 's nary a tow nor tugboat
Ter cross dat river's roll.
I wanter go cross in der calm time,
Fer Jordan 's chilly an' cole.

O ! chillen dat 's burnt in de cabins
Whilst de mammies out in de fiel',
An' chillen dat hears de death-call
Whilst dey be singin' a reel.
Roll, Jordan, roll !
On Jordan's banks I 'll stan'
Ter hear dat water roll ;
I 'm aimin' for Canaan lan'.

O! sister dat 's swingin' wid fever,
An' sister dat 's trimblin' wid chill,
Gwine have a love-feas' to-morrer;
You had better drink yo' fill.
Roll, Jordan, roll!
Dar 's nary a skiff for de sinner
Ter 'scape dat water's roll;
Nary a boat nor dugout
Ter save de sinner's soul.
O! chillen, for Canaan lan'.

O! dem dat 's pizen' wid conjure,
An' dem dat 's bit by a snake,
Dar 's comin' a time to-morrer
Fer you ter turn over an' wake.
Roll, Jordan, roll!
Brother, you better wade in,
Ter hear dat water roll.
You 'll leave yo' body laden
Des on de t'urrer sho'.

O! mother dat drag at de plough han'le,
An' mother dat drap at de hoe,
When you walk up de ladder ter heaven,
You won't hatter work no mo'.
Roll, Jordan, roll!
Mother go over dry-shod
Ter hear dem waters roll:
You 'll sholy go shoutin' ter glory,
Across dat river's roll.

IN THE SEA

The salt wind blows upon my cheek,
As it blew a year ago,
When twenty boats were crushed among
The rocks of Norman's Woe.
'Twas dark then ; 'tis light now,
And the sails are leaning low.

In dreams, I pull the seaweed o'er,
And find a face not his,
And hope another tide will be
More pitying than this :
The wind turns, the tide turns—
They take what hope there is.

My life goes on as thine would go,
With all its sweetness spilled :
My God, why should one heart of two
Beat on, when one is stilled ?
Through heart-wreck, or home-wreck,
Thy happy sparrows build.

Though boats go down, men build anew,
Whatever winds may blow ;
If blight be in the wheat one year,
We trust again and sow,
Though grief comes, and changes
The sunshine into snow.

Some have their dead, where, sweet and soon,
The summers bloom and go:
The sea withholds my dead—I walk
The bar when tides are low,
And wonder the grave-grass
Can have the heart to grow.

Flow on, O unconsenting sea,
And keep my dead below;
Though night—O utter night! my soul,
Delude thee long, I know,
Or life comes, or death comes,
God leads the eternal flow.

Hiram Rich.

CHRISTMAS SONG OF THE OLD CHILDREN

Well for youth to seek the strong,
  Beautiful and brave!
We, the old, who walk along
  Gently to the grave,
Only pay our court to thee,
Child of all Eternity!

We are old who once were young,
  And we grow more old;
Songs we are that have been sung,
  Tales that have been told;
Yellow leaves, wind-blown to thee,
Childhood of Eternity!

Grey-haired children come in crowds,
  Thee, their Hope, to greet:
Is it swaddling clothes or shrouds
  Hampering so our feet?
Eldest child, the shadows gloom!
Take the aged children home.

Fair is this out-world of thine,
  But its nights are cold;
And the sun that makes it fine,
  Makes us soon so old!
Long its shadows grow and dim—
Father, take us back with him!

George Mac Donald.

THE WIFE A-LOST

Since I noo mwore do zee your feäce,
Up steäirs or down below,
I 'll zit me in the lwonesome pleäce,
Where flat-bough'd beech do grow:
Below the beeches' bough, my love,
Where you did never come,
An' I don't look to meet you now,
As I do look at home.

Since you noo mwore be at my zide,
In walks in zummer het,
I 'll goo alwone where mist do ride,
Drough trees a-drippèn wet:
Below the raïn-wet bough, my love,
Where you did never come,
An' I don't grieve to miss ye now,
As I do grieve at home.

Since now bezide my dinner-bwoard
Your vaïce do never sound,
I 'll eat the bit I can avword,
A-vield upon the ground;
Below the darksome bough, my love,
Where you did never dine,
An' I don't grieve to miss ye now,
As I at home do pine.

Since I do miss your vaïce an' feäce
  In praÿer at eventide,
I 'll praÿ wi' woone said vaïce vor greäce
  To goo where you do bide ;
Above the tree an' bough, my love
  Where you be gone avore,
An' be a-waïtèn vor me now,
  To come vor evermwore.

William Barnes.

GOING AWAY

Do not be angry with me
For an idle word I say;
Do not be angry, father,
Because I am going away.
Have patience with me, my mother,
Though I may have none with you;
But I love you, I love you, mother,
Whatever I say or do.
Look kindly upon me, sister,
You are beautiful and gay;
Your days will be long and happy,
But I am going away.
With me, if you could but read it,
Clear written on cheek and brow,
There is no past, no future,—
Only a brief, calm Now:
A little space to be glad in—
A lesser space to grieve;
And life's whole scene fades from me,
As the landscape fades at eve.
Except—that eve I shall see not,
My day is ended at noon;
And the saddest bit of the story
Is—it does not end too soon.

I am so weary, weary!
I could turn my face to the wall;
Like a sick child, long before bedtime,
Drop asleep among you all:
So glad that lessons are over;
Still gladder that play is done;
And a dusky curtain stretches
Between me and the sun.

Good-bye, my father and mother!
Two of you—and but one of me!
And, sister, you'll find some stranger
Much closer than I could be:
One more—but death's quiet teaching
Is making me slowly wise:
My heart, too poor for his keeping—
Thou, God, Thou wilt not despise:
My soul, too weak for earth's battle,
Thou wilt gird up anew:
And the angels shall see me doing
The work I was meant to do:
The work that I ever failed in,
And wept o'er, and tried again,
Till brain and body and spirit
Snapped under the cruel strain.

That is over. So none need be sorry;
You rather ought to rejoice,
And sing my *vade in pacem*
Without a break in your voice;

And let me depart contented,
Before the heat of the day;
For I shall be still God's servant,
Although I have gone away!

Dinah M. Craik.

IN EARLIEST SPRING

Tossing his mane of snows in wildest eddies and tangles,
Warlike March cometh in, hoarse, with tempestuous breath,
Through all the moaning chimneys, and thwart all the hollows and angles
Round the shuddering house, breathing of winter and death.

But in my heart I feel the life of the wood and the meadow
Thrilling the pulses that own kindred with fibres that lift
Bud and blade to the sunward, within the inscrutable shadow,
Deep in the oak's chill core, under the gathering drift.

Nay, to earth's life with mine some presence or dream or desire
(How shall I name it aright?) comes for a moment and goes—
Rapture of life ineffable, perfect—as if in the brier,
Leafless there by my door, trembles a sense of the rose.

W. D. Howells.

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